w.museumsassociation.org | July/August 2011

Museums Journal

cuk-H06321-4-KP2873

Here comes the sun Can culture bring the crowds back to the seaside?

Digging it
Using archaeology to engage new audiences

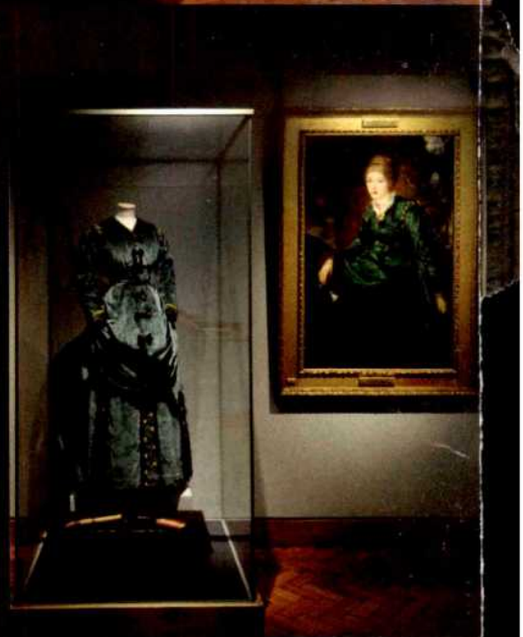
Field of dreams
Culture goes on tour for the festival season

Core business
Museums battle it out for Renaissance funding

ARMOUR SYSTEMS LIMITED

SHOWCASES FOR THE RICHARD JEFFERIES GALLERY AT THE WATTS GALLERY

The Watts Gallery appointed museum and exhibition designer Charles Marsden-Smedley in 2008 to design new lighting for all the galleries of the Watts Gallery, as part of the Lottery funded *Hope* Project and the design of an interpretation gallery: The Richard Jefferies Gallery. The glass case contains important objects illustrating the different themes that this gallery explores. The Wattses, and their marriage, family and circle of friends are represented next to their artistic and personal legacies. On the top is a terracotta model of the chapel displayed under a glass dome. On each long side of the case a timeline conveys the lives and times of the family members in the context of both British and international events. A table top case was chosen so that views of the paintings were maintained around the room and a full height costume case was specified to house the actual green dress worn by the lady in the painting beside it.



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Design Esterson Associates
Printed by Wyndeham Roche Limited
Subscription rates £105 UK; £160 overseas
Contributors Jānita Bagshawe, Maria Blyzinsky, Tim Bryan, Louise Gray, Oliver Green, Gareth Harris, Felicity Heywood, John Holt, Geraldine Kendall, Maev Kennedy, Emily Malcolm, Timothy Mason, Gaby Porter, Sarah Riddle, Patrick Steel, Janet Vitmayer, Caroline Worthington

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Museums Journal is published by the Museums Association (reg charity no 313024) and is editorially independent. Nothing should be taken to be the view of the MA unless stated. Museums Journal strives to avoid inaccuracies: if readers have a query or complaint they should contact the editor. Anyone who would like to contribute an article to Museums Journal is asked to first contact the editor.
ISSN 0-027-416-X

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Calcutta University Library ALIPORE CAMPUS

CENTRAL LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA 26/08/11

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MAIN COVER IMAGE: COURTESY DANIEL BUREN PHOTOGRAPHY © DAVID GRANDORGE (BORROWING AND MULTIPLYING THE LANDSCAPE)

Editorial

Protests against cuts need more direction

It was hard to move last month without tripping over someone protesting about something.

Aside from the public sector strike which, at the time of writing, looked as if it would lead to the closure of some national museums, protests against cuts to culture were gathering pace.

In June, the Lost Arts website was launched by a consortium of eight unions, while the Museums Association (MA) announced the first findings from its cuts survey.

And the picture, as you might guess, is not pretty. The Lost Arts website is keeping a running total of cuts to the arts over the next three years. At the time of writing, it was more than £20m – a figure that will only rise.

The initial results from the MA's cuts survey don't make pleasant reading either; 40% of the local authority museums that responded said they had reduced the number of staff by 10% in the past year.

The full survey results will be published on the MA website on 20 July, and will, no doubt, expose closures, cuts to opening hours, the introduction of entrance fees and charging for services such as school visits.

'In the MA's cuts survey, 40% of the local authority museums that responded said they had reduced the number of staff by 10% in the past year'

It's great to have an idea of where the cuts are hitting, rather than just anecdotal evidence of generalised gloom, but it would also be useful to have an idea what to do with the information that has been gathered.

What museums need is a campaign that comes from the grassroots up, and includes users and staff. It would not only expose the damage that cuts can do, but also have the advantage of getting a wide range of people involved in, and committed to, museums.

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
sharon@museumsassociation.org
www.twitter.com/sharonheal
www.museumsassociation.org/cuts

● Readers should note that there will not be an August issue of Museums Journal. News will be updated regularly on the MA website throughout this period and the next issue will be published on 1 September.

Museums Association exposes depth of local authority funding cuts

Replacement of paid staff with volunteers on rise

Rebecca Atkinson

Cuts monitor

Several local authority museum services appear to be replacing paid staff with volunteers, according to research carried out by the Museums Association (MA).

The MA's confidential cuts survey asked respondents to compare the current situation within their museum with that of April 2010.

Early results reveal that 37% of the 63 local authority to have responded have increased the number of volunteers over the past year. Of those, 35% have cut paid staff by between a tenth and a quarter, and 22% by more than a quarter.

Volunteers are often museums studies graduates

Maurice Davies, head of policy and communication at the MA, said: "It's alarming that museums seem to be replacing experienced and skilled staff with volunteers. If they are, in fact, qualified museum professionals seeking paid work, then it also smacks of exploitation."

One MA member wrote on the association's website: "By recruiting more volunteers to fulfil essential tasks, museums reinforce the idea that they are a luxury pursuit rather than an essential community service. This gives policymakers an excuse to look first at the museums' budget when cash runs out."

The full survey results will be published on the MA website on 20 July.

www.museumsassociation.org/cuts

New campaign documents losses in cultural sector

Trade unions set up Lost Arts to track axed projects and jobs

Patrick Steel

A consortium of trade unions has launched a campaign called Lost Arts, which records arts projects, jobs and organisations that have been axed because of cuts in public funding.

Dave Allen, a negotiator for Prospect, said: "We believe that these budget cuts are a false economy, when we know that every pound spent in the arts earns another two pounds in the wider economy.

"We want to raise the profile of the cultural heritage sector and get out our concerns about the loss of collections and expertise.

"We also want to highlight the detrimental effect on the public of a rise in pay-per-view museums. We do not want a return to charging for general admission at museums that are currently free."

The Musicians' Union is part of the consortium that has set up Lost Arts

The consortium comprises the PCS, Prospect, Equity, Musicians' Union, Unite, Bectu, Writers' Guild of Great Britain and the National Union of Journalists.

The campaign comes as other initiatives are struggling to maintain momentum.

The Save the Arts website has not been updated for several months and needs 35,000 signatures to reach its 100,000 target, while I Value the Arts is still in its infancy, according to a spokesman for lead organisation the National Campaign for the Arts.

Following a ballot by trade union PCS, retail workers, security officers and warders took strike action at museums across the UK last month.

A PCS spokeswoman confirmed that the union was considering further action over the summer.

www.lost-arts.org

Future of core museums model comes into doubt

MA seeks bold alternative to core museum funding model proposed by MLA

Patrick Steel

The Museums Association (MA) is urging Arts Council England (ACE) to be bold over its plans for the future of Renaissance.

The MA published a plan in May that called for a wider distribution of funding based on public benefit rather than the core museums model proposed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

The MA said its proposal had been well-received but Iain Watson, director of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, said he felt there was an important role for "core" museums, which he said had the capacity to be exemplars, and were resourced to be able to deliver a greater than local role. "I am convinced that these 'cores', or whatever they are called, need to work in partnership nationally and locally, and will be able to engage widely with the sector," said Watson.

The Great North Museum at Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

Nick Merriman, director of Manchester Museum, said museums that were currently part of Renaissance generally supported the idea of core museums, while those who weren't, tended not to.

"On balance, I support the MA's view that it should be about excellence in outcome rather than, say, population size. But the pot is still limited, and I think it is important that ACE makes sure that it does not spread the money so thinly that it does not make a substantial difference."

An ACE spokeswoman said: "The arts council welcomes the MA's views, along with other views from the sector. We will be considering them fully and responding shortly.

"We understand that people want to know about the funding criteria as soon as possible, so we will be announcing our terms in the autumn, in plenty of time for 2012-13 budgets."

The MA is developing a framework to inform ACE's decisions on the criteria and is hoping to work closely with the arts council and to consult MA members in the summer.
www.museumsassociation.org/framework

Art Fund seeks creative applications for new grant

Renew offers £600,000 to build collections

Rebecca Atkinson

The Art Fund has put out a call for "creative and ambitious" applications for a new £600,000 funding scheme for art collections.

The Renew grant, which was awarded to the Art Fund by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation as part of its 50th birthday celebrations, will provide 100% of funding to up to six museums to build new art collections.

The scheme aims to encourage curatorial approaches to collecting, and create opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing between departments and institutions.

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: "The generous gift from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation will drive this innovative scheme to encourage new kinds of collecting in UK museums and galleries."

Museums and galleries are encouraged to submit applications for building collections that either connect with or develop existing ones, or stimulate new areas of collecting in "unexpected, ambitious, creative but relevant ways".

The Art Fund International scheme helped representatives from Mima visit Ellsworth Kelly's studio to discuss the loan of the artist's drawings

Any clearly defined area of collecting will be considered, including site-specific works.

Sally Cross, collections coordinator at the Museums Association, said: "This scheme aims to support curatorial skill and confidence, so museums can make strategic collecting decisions, which will foster future best practice. As Renew provides 100% funding, it will encourage museums to get involved that otherwise might not have."

The application deadline is 29 July and the successful institutions will be notified in early September.
www.artfund.org/renew

JACK SHEAR

In brief

London volunteering guide
Boris Johnson has published a guide to volunteering across the arts and cultural sector in London. The guide is part of the mayor's volunteer strategy, dubbed "Team London", a city-wide initiative designed to increase volunteering and engagement by Londoners in charity work.
http://bit.ly/jfCdJq

Bristol theatre collection

The University of Bristol has created a £300,000 storage facility to house the Raymond Mander & Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection, which comprises more than 500,000 items from the past 200 years of British theatre. More than 350 works of art, props, press cuttings, costumes and ceramics form part of the holdings, along with material on major actors, writers and designers and almost every London theatre of the past two centuries. Pictured is Robert William Buss' George Almar as Carnaby Catchpurse in The Cedar Chest (1834).

Accreditation transfer
The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council has agreed arrangements for the transfer of the revised Accreditation scheme to the arts council. It will be launched at the Museums Association conference in Brighton in October.
http://bit.ly/9Te3Yb

Portsmouth cuts hours
Portsmouth City Council has decided to close all its museums, with the exception of the D-Day Museum, on Mondays to help meet budget cuts. Among those affected are the Charles Dickens Birthplace Museum. All of the city's museums will continue to open on bank holidays.

Sea change: new photography exhibition will chart Blackpool's changes over the past 100 years

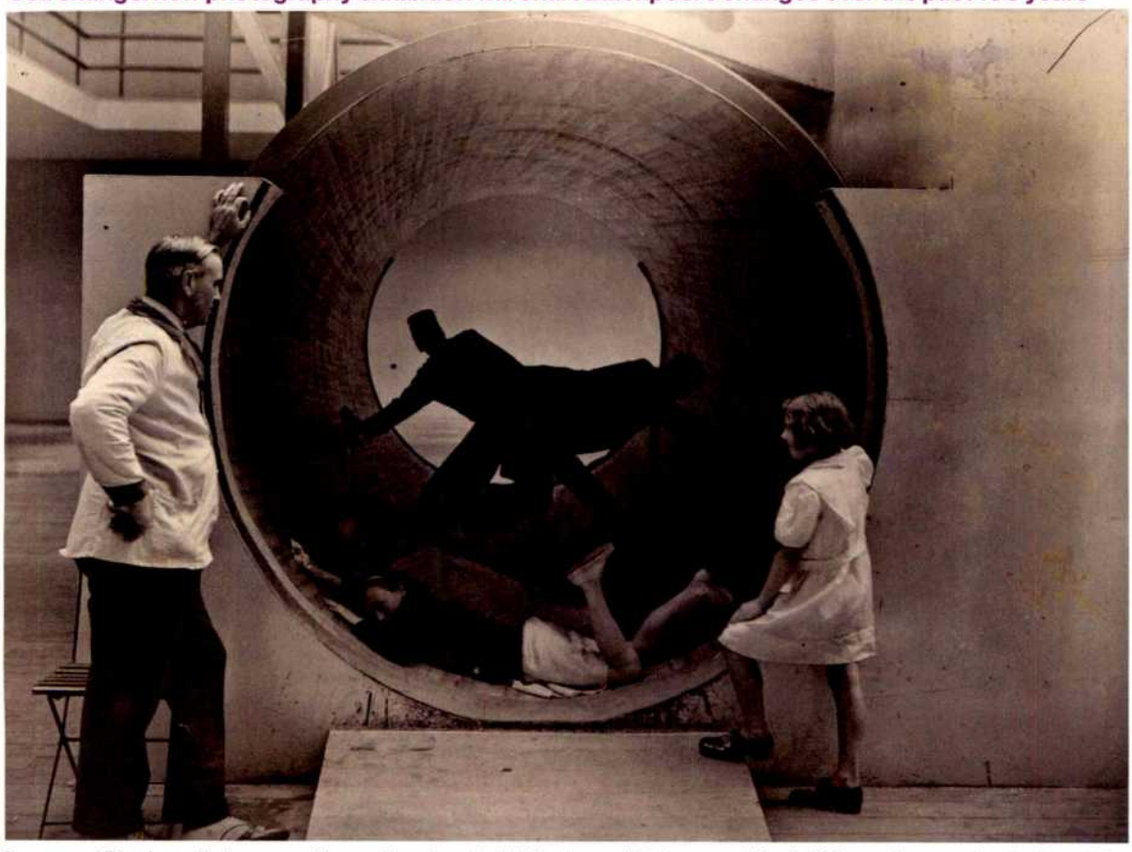


PHOTO BY CHARLES HOWELL, FUNHOUSE PLEASURE BEACH BLACKPOOL 1934

Images of Blackpool taken over the past century by high-profile European photographers go on show in Mass Photography: Blackpool Seen Through the Camera at the Grundy Art Gallery on 6 August. Photographers such as Martin Parr, Bruce Davidson, Peter Marlow, Alfred Gregory and Humphrey Spender give their take on the seaside town and the holidaymakers on the Golden Mile, capturing social and economic changes. The exhibition, which runs until 5 November, also features works drawn from local archives, including pictures of performances at the Tower Circus, as well as a video installation incorporating footage of the Blackpool Illuminations.

Black-heritage centre to open

South London facility will open doors next year

Patrick Steel

The country's first black-heritage centre will open at the end of 2012 in south London.

Following a £6.5m redevelopment, Raleigh House in Brixton will house the Black Cultural Archives (BCA), alongside a temporary exhibition space, education facilities and a cafe.

Last month, Middlesex University transferred the Runnymede Collection, consisting of more than 6,000 items documenting UK race relations since 1968, and the Commission for British Muslims and Islamophobia Archive, to the BCA.

A BCA spokeswoman said the centre's resources would be available to everyone. Funding for the centre has come from the Heritage Lottery Fund (£4m), the London Development Agency (£1m) and Lambeth Council (£910,000).

National museums review staffing

British Library to axe 215 jobs and 40 redundancies at National Museum of Science and Industry

Patrick Steel

National museums are starting to feel the bite of the funding cuts, with redundancies and staffing reviews announced at the British Library, National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI), British Museum and Imperial War Museum (IWM).

The British Library will cut 215 jobs over the next three years, and will reprioritise its activities to make savings in acquisitions, preservation and facilities management. The library also plans to introduce charges for temporary exhibitions in its Paccar Gallery later this year.

BOB AND ROBERTA SMITH/SAVE THE ARTS

Museum and gallery opening hours are being cut to save money

The NMSI is consulting staff over 40 proposed redundancies across the Science Museum, National Railway Museum and National Media Museum, as part of a restructure. The NMSI has also frozen recruitment and is introducing fixed-term contracts for some roles.

An NMSI spokeswoman said: "It is anticipated that some full-time posts will be lost. Where possible, these will be through natural turnover and voluntary redundancy, but it is also intended for some new positions to be created as part of the restructure."

The British Museum is consulting on 23 job losses: 11 in the Paul Hamlyn Library, eight in capital projects and estates, and four across other departments. The museum reduced Thursday night opening hours, as well as those for the Great Court, in January.

The IWM ran a voluntary redundancy scheme in February, when six staff left. It is now consulting on one compulsory redundancy. A spokeswoman for the museum said it was focusing on "invest to save" projects, prioritising initiatives to boost income through philanthropy and commercial opportunities.

English Heritage is also consulting staff over redundancies, and announced last year that it would restructure the organisation and lose at least 200 posts to meet its funding cuts. The full number of redundancies will not be known until the end of the consultation process later this year.

British Museum could shut Paul Hamlyn library

Public library's future is jeopardised by 15% cut to museum's grant-in-aid budget

Gareth Harris

The Paul Hamlyn public library at the British Museum, which is home to more than 50,000 books and journals, is under threat of closure as part of a cost-cutting exercise.

A spokeswoman for the British Museum said it regretted that it was having to consider the closure of the library as part of its efforts to accommodate a 15% cut to the museum's grant-in-aid budget.

The move has been heavily criticised by the Historic Libraries Forum, which said in a statement to its members: "This library is an invaluable resource for the public and for museum staff, and plays an important role in public access at the museum, providing support for teachers, schoolchildren and their families."

The forum also raised concerns about possible staff redundancies and the future of the library collection.

The spokeswoman for the museum said: "Eleven staff will be affected. We are still discussing what will happen to the books and consulting with the sponsor."

BRITISH MUSEUM

The Paul Hamlyn Library is home to 50,000 books

Staff have been canvassed as part of a 90-day internal consultation about the future of the library.

Robert Dufton, director of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, said: "We would be disappointed to see the closure of the Paul Hamlyn Library at the British Museum. We believe that the library has an important part to play, alongside online resources, in enabling effective and deep learning, and providing information about the collections at the museum."

The library has been temporarily relocated from the Reading Room.

The British Museum spokeswoman said it had been given planning permission to continue to use the Reading Room for temporary exhibitions until 2014.

"No decisions regarding its future use have yet been made but the museum will consult widely on proposals," said the spokeswoman.

The library's collections cover the range of world cultures represented in the museum and include material relating to the history and development of the museum.

Royal Armouries sets sights on North America

Museum in talks about establishing galleries in several venues

Gareth Harris

The Royal Armouries in Leeds is in discussions about establishing semi-permanent galleries at several venues in North America.

The National Museum of the United States Army in Washington, DC, and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto are in negotiations with the UK museum, according to the Art Newspaper.

A spokeswoman for the Royal Armouries said any partnerships would be "similar to our current arrangement at the Frazier International History Museum in Louisville, Kentucky".

The Royal Armouries opened its US branch in 2004. More than 400 artefacts are on display on the third floor of the Frazier museum as part of a commercial deal.

The Royal Armouries

The spokeswoman for the Royal Armouries said: "Negotiations are in their very early stages, but we are also considering staging travelling exhibitions at various North American venues during 2014-16."

"These would be based on some of the Royal Armouries' exhibits, with the working title Dangerous Arts."

She declined to discuss the financial details of the arrangement.

In brief

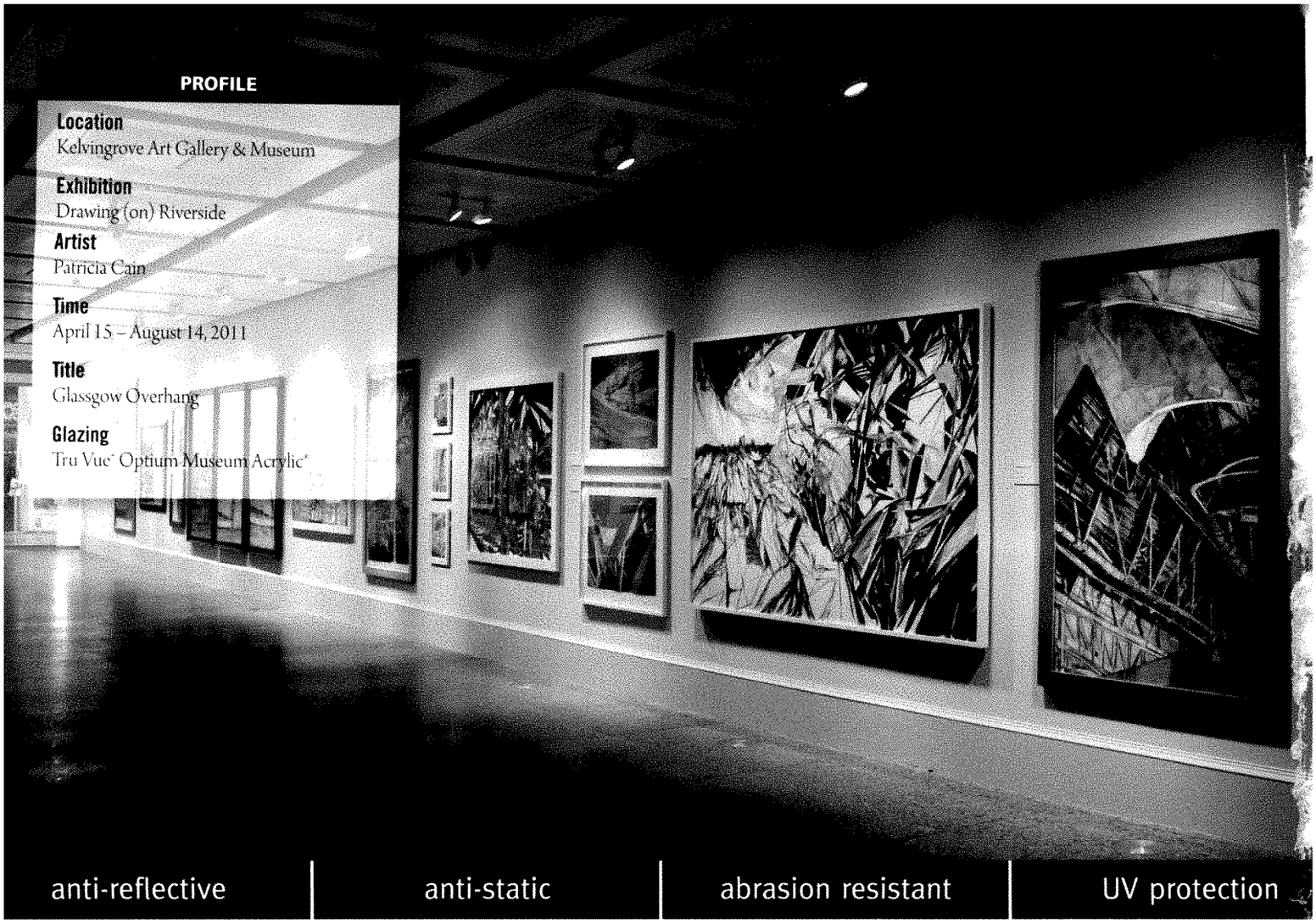
Sports exhibitions hailed
Our Sporting Life, a series of community-led exhibitions spearheaded by the Sports Heritage Network and supported by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, has attracted more than 100,000 visitors over the past year. More than 100 sports clubs have been involved in 18 exhibitions so far, featuring sporting moments and heroes, with another 97 shows planned.

New website targets young

A new website that aims to get young people interested in contemporary art has been launched by the Hayward Gallery, Royal Academy of Arts, South London Gallery, Tate Britain and Whitechapel Gallery, in conjunction with Louis Vuitton. Among the site's facilities is a Projects section, where participants can show their work. *www.recreativeuk.com*

Dulwich welcomes carers
Dulwich Picture Gallery in London hosted a local Carers' Day in June as part of National Carers' Week, running guided tours of the 17th- and 18th-century art collections. Carers' groups have participated in workshops throughout the year at the institution, as part of the Good Times: Art for Older People scheme.

Northern prize judges
The Northern Art Prize has announced the judges and longlist for the 2011 prize. Judges include Caroline Douglas, head of the Arts Council Collection; Tim Marlow, director of exhibitions at the White Cube Gallery; and Simon Wallis, director of the Hepworth Wakefield. The shortlist will be announced in July. The longlist can be viewed at: *www.northernartprize.org.uk/2011-prize/longlist*



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Unveiling of Bristol's M Shed kicks off a summer of multimillion-pound museum openings

The £27m M Shed city history museum opened in Bristol in June, one of a number of major new venues being unveiled in the UK over the summer. The museum tells the story of the city through three galleries focusing on people, place and daily lives.

Other openings in June included the £74m Riverside Museum in Glasgow, which holds the city's transport collections and the £11m refurbishment of the Watts Gallery in Compton, Surrey.

July sees the opening of the National Museum of Art in Cardiff, part of a £6.5m project; the £72m Museum of Liverpool; the £46m redevelopment of the National Museum of Scotland; and the £35m Sammy Ofer Wing of the National Maritime Museum in London.

Hull backs museums

Council decides not to cut museum budget

Sharon Heal

Hull City Council has decided not to cut the budget of its museum service after a change of administration in the local elections.

Cuts of £300,000 had been proposed, which according to Simon Green, the assistant head of service, would have meant introducing seasonal opening at all of its sites across the city. Green said he was delighted with the decision and that staff were "over the moon".

Councillor Terry Geraghty, the portfolio holder for leisure and culture, said: "Our decision to keep them open as usual sends a strong message to potential investors that Hull's open for business."

According to a council statement, the decision to retain current opening hours has saved the jobs of several staff at risk from redundancy.

Visiting museums can boost your health

Report outlines link between health and cultural activities

Gareth Harris

Visiting museums and other cultural venues can improve people's health, according to a new report.

The aim of the report, Cultural Attendance and Public Mental Health: from Research to Practice, was to "analyse the association between cultural activity and perceived health, anxiety, depression and satisfaction with life in both genders".

Researchers at the London-based Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health interviewed 50,797 adults from Nord-Trøndelag county in Norway.

Participants were asked about their "receptive" activities, such as attending galleries and cultural events, and "creative" side involving hands-on aspects such as painting, singing and playing an instrument.

Both types of cultural activity were "significantly associated with good health, good satisfaction with life, low anxiety and depression scores in both genders", regardless of social background. "Receptive" activities, however, boost men's health in particular.

"The study findings are not at all a surprise, as they confirm many previous studies," said Mark O'Neill, director of policy, research and development at Glasgow Life and the author of the report.

"What all this research means is that museums are part of a general well-being service that has a preventive health function."

When asked whether such studies could help raise private and public funding, O'Neill said: "Leveraging money may be possible, but it would require close and genuine long-term partnerships with the NHS and other health agencies, enabling people in target groups to access cultural facilities in large enough numbers to make a difference at a population level.

"Such partnerships take a long time to develop," O'Neill said. "They are, however, what museums should be doing anyway, as many are."

Riverside Museum, Glasgow

LENNY WARREN/WARREN MEDIA

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MP
Free MP seminar programme

For more details and to register go to
www.museumsassociation.org/visitexhibition

UK-wide catalogue of oil paintings goes online

Website will give public online access to more than 200,000 paintings

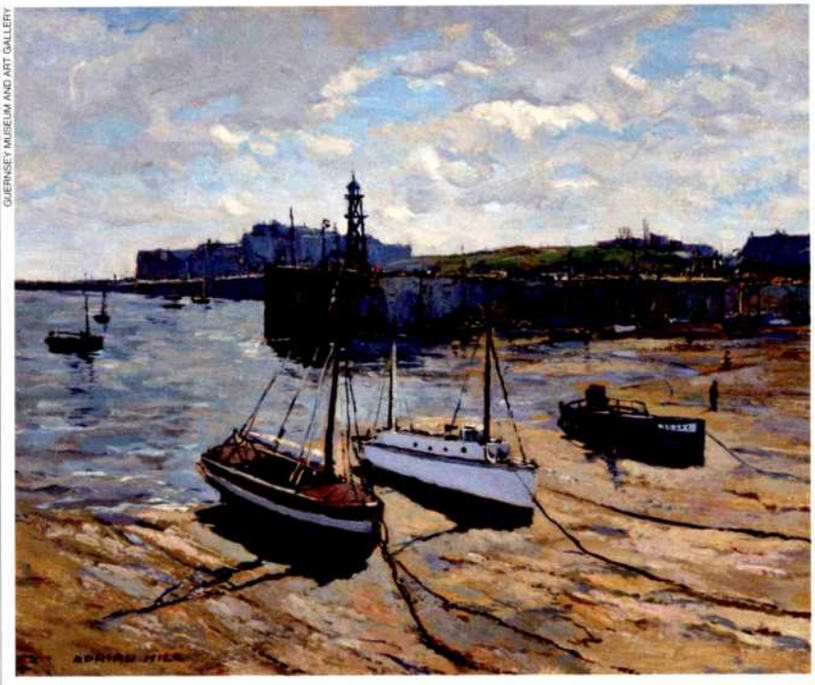
Rebecca Atkinson

Members of the public are being asked to tag a digital database of oil paintings as part of a project to give everyone online access to the estimated 200,000 publicly owned paintings in the UK by 2012.

The Your Paintings project is a joint initiative between the BBC, which is funding the development of the website, and the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF).

The website, which was launched in June, enables people to search for artworks and find out more about them and where they are housed. By 2012, the PCF, aims to have digitised about 200,000 works from more than 3,000 institutions – 80% of which are either in storage or in buildings that the public cannot access.

Andrew Ellis, the director of the PCF, said: "No country has ever embarked on such a monumental project to showcase its entire painting collection, working with communities and individuals all over the country. [It is] only possible thanks to the advent of digital technologies, and the unique resource of the BBC."



GUERNSEY MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Harbour by Adrian Keith Graham Hill is part of the Your Paintings online project

Registered users will be able to search paintings by various criteria and view larger images, while collections will be able to update their painting records. The project is also using crowdsourcing to create metadata about works. By looking at the works in detail, users can tag these with subject classifications and keyword information.

The PCF, a charity, was set up in 2003 to photograph and record all paintings in publicly owned collections in the UK. It has been working with the BBC to digitise these works since 2009.

www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings

Football museum to reopen early next year

Museum move takes longer than expected

Gareth Harris

The National Football Museum is to open in its new home, the former Urbis space in Manchester, early next year. It had originally been due to open in the city this summer.

Until early 2010, the museum was based at Preston North End's Deepdale stadium, but a funding crisis prompted the trustees to enter into a partnership with Manchester City Council, despite objections in Preston.

The move forced the closure of Urbis, which had become a popular temporary exhibition venue in Manchester, in March last year.

The project's capital costs are £8m, with the European Regional Development Fund providing £3.9m, and the remainder coming from Manchester City Council.

Urbis will be the National Football Museum's new home

The council has also pledged £2m annually in revenue funding, which a council spokesman said "would meet running costs".

Until March, the museum received £105,000 annually from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). But this funding was cut following DCMS's decision to relinquish control and sponsorship of eight non-national museums, including the National Football Museum.

Funding news

Let's get digital

More details have been released on a new £500,000 fund for projects that use digital technologies to engage audiences in arts and culture.

The **Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture** is supported by Arts Council England, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts. It is hoped that the projects developed will be shared by other organisations in the cultural sector.

The **six key areas for proposals** are: user-generated content and social media; distribution (using digital technologies to deliver artistic and cultural experiences and content in new ways); mobile, location and games; data and archives; resources (using digital technologies to improve the way in which arts and cultural organisations are run); and education and learning.

The deadline for applications for the Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture is **2 September**.

In the area of philanthropy, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is encouraging cultural organisations to respond to a consultation by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) related to legacy giving.

In the budget, the government announced plans to introduce a **lower rate of inheritance tax** where people leave a charitable legacy of 10% or more of their estate when they die. This change is expected to apply for deaths on or after 6 April 2012.

This consultation will inform aspects of the policy that have not yet been decided and how the HMRC can implement the policy. The closing date is 31 August.

www.nesta.org.uk
www.hmrc.gov.uk/

Simon Stephens

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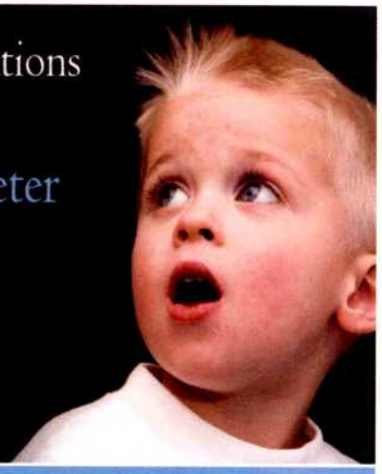

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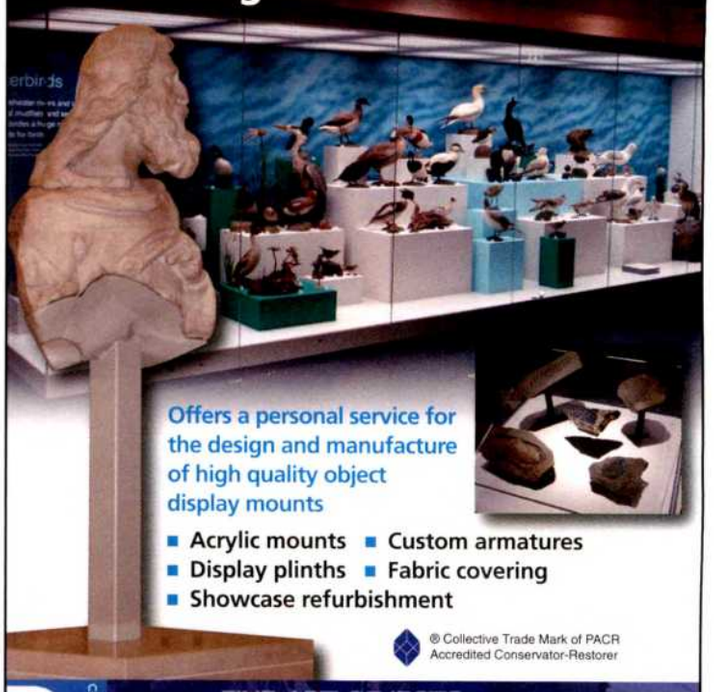

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MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 2011

The **2011 Annual General Meeting** of the Museums Association will take place at 1715 on Monday 3 October in the Brighton Centre, Brighton. All members are eligible to attend and propose special or ordinary resolutions. Resolutions should be submitted to the Director by Friday 5 August. Any members wishing to do so should obtain details from the Director. The agenda and papers for the AGM will be made available to all members in early September.

Community group takes over Hampshire museums

Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery to be run by teams of volunteers

Rebecca Atkinson

Hampshire County Council has introduced a governance model at two of its museums that will involve a community group running them with teams of local volunteers.

The Curtis Museum and the Allen Gallery, both in Alton, have been temporarily taken over by standalone charitable organisation the Hampshire Museums and Galleries Trust (HMGT).

It will recruit and train the volunteers, and investigate new ways to commercialise the museum and gallery, using a £22,000 council grant as well as external funding.

Hampshire County Council will continue to own the museum building and collection, but said funding cuts meant it would no longer finance in-house staffing.

Five museum staff have taken voluntary redundancy

Five employees have taken voluntary redundancy, while a sixth is being considered for a role elsewhere in the service. Curatorial expertise and educational services will be made available from the council's wider museum service.

Councillor Keith Chapman, executive member for culture and recreation at Hampshire council, said: "We remain committed to providing a core professional museum service and adapting innovative ways of maintaining and enhancing access to our venues and collections."

A council spokeswoman added that, if the new model proves successful, the running of several museums could be handed over to their local communities.

Ian Smith, director of development at HMGT, said: "Our role is to facilitate the change from direct ownership over a to a big society approach, and ensure as smooth a changeover as possible."

Events mark slavery day

A host of museums gear up for 23 August

Patrick Steel

Museums across England are preparing to mark International Slavery Remembrance Day on 23 August.

The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London, will hold a series of events in its Atlantic Worlds gallery, including an alternative tour of the gallery by actor and director Burt Caesar.

The Museum of London is to open a display entitled Freedom From: Modern Slavery in the Capital, which considers the impact of human trafficking and enslavement in London today, and will run from 23 August to 20 November.

The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool will host a lecture by Maulana Karenga, founder of black power organisation Us, on 22 August.

World news digest

Austria: A survey of works by the Austrian fashion designer Helmut Lang, set to open this autumn at Vienna's Museum für Angewandte Kunst, has been cancelled. The museum said the exhibition had been organised by former director Peter Noever, who resigned in January following allegations that he had mismanaged funds.

France: The Pompidou Centre in Paris will launch a mobile museum later this year that will travel to the provinces of France. The travelling structure, designed by Patrick Bouchain, will first visit Chaumont-en-Champagne in the north-east of the country. Works by Léger, Braque and Picasso are included in the opening show.

France: A UK entrepreneur who set up the world's largest commodity hedge fund has opened a museum for his antiquities collection in Mougins, in the south of France. Christian Levett is showing about 700 ancient works in his Museum of Classical Art, which also houses pieces by modern and contemporary artists including Edgar Degas and Marc Quinn.

Italy: The Venice Biennale, the major contemporary art exhibition founded in 1895, opened last month with a record 89 national participants. Mike Nelson, Britain's representative, reworked a piece originally built for the 2003 Istanbul Biennial, entitled Magazin: Büyük Valide Han. Nelson has rebuilt a 17th-century Turkish caravanserai (roadside inn) inside the British pavilion. Meanwhile, members of the US Track and Field team interact with sculptures at the US pavilion in an installation by the Puerto Rico-based artist duo Allora and Calzadilla. The exhibition runs until 27 November.

Allora and Calzadilla's Track and Field installation at the Venice Biennale

Russia: An exhibition of clothes designed by Christian Dior at the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, which juxtaposes the French designer's garments with works by artists such as Van Gogh and Malevich, has received a mixed critical response. One Russian art critic said the museum was "pretending to be a flagship boutique". The exhibition closes on 24 July.

US: Volkswagen has announced a two-year, multimillion-dollar sponsorship package for the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The car manufacturer will provide funding for an international contemporary art show at PS1 (the museum's Long Island City branch), the acquisition of two works by Belgian artist Francis Alys, and a series of installations in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, Art in America, Bloomberg and Der Standard

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Barriers to entry remain

Sector is less accessible to disadvantaged young people due to upheaval in higher education

Geraldine Kendall

In 2007, the Tomorrow People report, published by the Museums Association (MA) and University of East Anglia, found that financial barriers were discouraging young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds from getting a job in museums.

These included a general expectation among museums that new entrants had to be educated to postgraduate level and have extensive work experience.

A follow-up action plan in 2008 recommended that the sector attract a more diverse range of staff by, among other things, increasing entry-level training on the job, wider recognition of National Vocational Qualifications and transferable skills, and providing more traineeships and apprenticeships.

Government cuts

Much has changed since the report's publication, particularly the onset of the recession and swingeing government cuts to the arts and higher education.

English universities face a 40% cut to their teaching budgets over the next four years to £4.2bn. This has been coupled with a radical restructuring of higher-education funding, including the controversial move to treble the cap for annual undergraduate fees to £9,000.

A recent MA survey found that out of 11 undergraduate museum-related course providers in England, 75% plan to charge the maximum rate, and none are charging less than £8,000. Most universities argue that they have no choice but to charge the maximum simply to maintain standards.

Under the government's plans, any university charging more than £6,000 must introduce measures to widen access for disadvantaged students, including contributions to the national scholarship fund that offers grants to promising disadvantaged students.

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Finding paid employment is a tough task for museums studies students

But universities will not be fined for failing to meet access targets and, according to figures from university thinktank Million+, the scholarship programme will raise enough to fund only 8,300 students.

Fees are also on the rise elsewhere in the UK. Welsh universities have applied to raise the cap from £3,000 to £4,000 for domiciled students, although they have been told to rewrite their plans to encourage more disadvantaged students to take up places.

Universities in Northern Ireland are attempting to raise fees for domiciles to a maximum £5,570. Scottish residents receive free tertiary education at home, but must apply for student loans if they study elsewhere in the UK.

All three devolved nations have indicated they will raise fees for non-domiciled UK students, with universities in Wales and Northern Ireland planning to charge £9,000.

These price hikes coincide with further increases in the cost of postgraduate course fees – a prerequisite for a lot of jobs in museums. The average cost of a museum-related master's degree is £5,000 in England and £3,900 elsewhere in the UK. One accredited course, University College London's MA in museum studies, has confirmed that its fees will rise by £1,000 next year to £6,170. More universities are likely to follow suit.

A blog by two cultural heritage postgraduates for the MA website on the difficulties of gaining a foothold in the field elicited a strong reaction, with respondents testifying that even with months of voluntary experience and qualifications worth more than £30,000, they had been turned down for jobs offering annual salaries of £13,000.

Student finances

- **£16,000-£19,000:** average starting salary in the museum sector.
- **£21,000:** salary threshold at which English graduates will start repayments on their loans from 2016.
- **4.4%:** the current maximum rate of compound interest that may be levied on student loans, based on the Retail Price Index.
- **£64,239:** what a graduate starting on £21,000, rising by 5% a year, would end up paying over 30 years, according to the Chartered Institute for Taxation.

The current climate does little to foster career certainty for graduates, with widespread redundancies, slashed training budgets and recruitment freezes.

However, the cultural heritage sector remains attractive to students. Last month, a scheme offering 20 paid internships at National Museums Scotland (NMS) to graduates drew more than 20,000 website hits and 1,000 applicants. The internships were worth £15,000 a year.

In future, students facing substantial debts will be keen to see a quick return on their investment, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are likely to gravitate away from arts and humanities (the traditional route for many museum studies postgraduates) towards vocational or business-oriented courses.

Humanities threatened

In England, the government is explicitly encouraging this move, with plans to phase out direct grants for arts and humanities from 2012, meaning that universities – especially cash-strapped ones that tend to attract more disadvantaged students – may curtail such courses.

Help does exist for poorer graduates, but schemes such as the Heritage Lottery Fund's one-off Skills for the Future, which funded the NMS internships, are scarce and heavily oversubscribed. Other programmes designed to help disadvantaged young people into employment, such as the Future Jobs Fund, have been scrapped.

The sector has recognised its moral and economic imperative to represent diverse communities for some time but, in spite of recent advances, its workforce remains more than 90% white and middle-class. With the forthcoming upheaval in higher education, this is unlikely to improve in the near future.

Beyond Renaissance and towards a new strategy

Gaby Porter

The Museums Association (MA) has come through tough times and it has thought hard about its purpose and priorities as a result.

At our first meeting, the new board was immediately called on for leadership: Arts Council England (ACE) invited our views on its future role in taking over key museum functions. We created a small task group to develop our thinking and to build on contributions from other board members and senior staff. We presented our submission to ACE in exactly seven weeks.

We saw this as an opportunity to think afresh and boldly in a completely changed political and cultural landscape; to draw on the huge breadth of the MA's membership, sector knowledge and experience; to encourage the development of a framework for a balanced museum portfolio; and to think beyond Renaissance to a strategy to guide longer-term investment and decision-making.

The consensus was strong around these key points. ACE's funding and support should broaden the reach, impact and public benefit of museums and galleries, giving broad opportunities for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. To this end, the MA encouraged ACE to broaden its investment "portfolio" to foster a healthy and diverse ecology in the sector.

Funding should encourage coalitions that strengthen impact and reach, and drive efficiencies; investment should support the whole public purpose of organisations or coalitions: it should not foster discrete "projects", or support infrastructure or institutional improvement per se.

Evidence-gathering and evaluation should focus on outcomes and the impact of services, and enable national comparisons to be made. ACE should encourage honest reporting and shared reflection in order to build on learning. Sector-wide programmes should also be driven by the overarching goals of reach, impact and public benefit.

We each brought our own thinking about leadership to this task. For me, the questions are: where are the most creative and courageous leaders providing new thinking in this changed landscape? What qualities do we need to develop and nourish? How might we move beyond limiting assumptions, to generate new possibilities? How will museums foster and generate new kinds of prosperity, well-being and citizenship, based on experience, connection and participation? What part will they play in a genuinely sustainable future?

Some organisations are finding new expressions of their institutional purpose. The people in them explore new territory, guided by a deep sense of what they stand for, what fulfils and sustains audiences, and other stakeholders, their business and themselves. They look to their longer-term purpose, expanding their portfolio and repertoire. They are not following others, or what they think others expect of them.

Organisation that are doing this, to name a few, are: the Museum of East Anglian Life in its pursuit of happiness; Historic Royal Palaces, especially the Enchanted Palace, for its storytelling and intrigue, bringing hidden stories to life; the Green Museum Leaders in the North West for the diversity and impact of initiatives generated; and the commitment to rethink collaboration from the Marches Network.

What stands out for me in all of these is the passion and engagement of the people involved – staff and volunteers. The museum experience has been invigorated, enriched and become more rewarding for them too.

Gaby Porter is an MA board member, co-director of the Museum Leaders Programme and an independent consultant

The diary of a national museum director *Part 14*

Bullingdon is furious. The Germans have stolen a march on us yet again. Their museums have collaborated to stage a huge exhibition on the Enlightenment in China, and everyone who is anyone has been out to see it. "Think of an idea that the English invented," he stormed," and get an exhibition out there PDQ."

It seemed to me that our big idea is colonialism. We tried it out on Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and once we had perfected the model, we coloured the world pink.

Jeremy loved the concept. "Colonialism brought the railways to India and Christianity to Africa!" he shouted. "And without colonialism Britain would not be the multicultural society it is today." He leapt from his chair, and ran round the room, yelling: "Augustus, do you realise what you have done? By challenging conventional wisdom, you have defined the Conservative cultural agenda for our generation.

"The British Museum," he said, "is as colonial as a slave's shackles, but always pretends otherwise. You have had the courage to define the policy that dare not speak its name."

PAUL BOMMER

The exhibition will have a trial run in the UK this autumn. It will then be the centrepiece of the UK Today festival in China in 2012, before travelling to all four corners of the world.

We have hired Erin Bonk and June Quid of Bonk for a Quid, to lead the press and PR campaign. They have assured me that our six-star champagne and limo PR trip to Beijing next year will be over-subscribed. But they think the British media won't be interested in the launch of the UK tour in Basingstoke in September. "Too far from London," June explained.

Does business sense compromise core values?

Janita Bagshawe

To survive the current economic crisis, will taking a tough commercial view of museums and their assets give rise to greater innovation and creativity, and result in sustainable economic and business models and outcomes, or will it lead to a serious compromise of core values?

On a financial balance sheet, collections and buildings appear as assets with a value. The hard-nosed business person would expect to see those assets providing a good financial return or at least a proven social return. But the concept of considering the social return from assets is not embedded fully in the sector and the notion of financial return, with some notable exceptions, is largely limited to what might be yielded from merchandising based on collections and hiring out space. Most of us would probably admit that our assets cost more to store and look after than the value they return. Can we afford to ignore this fact in developing our future business models?

Museums should be taking imaginative approaches to audience engagement, exhibitions, interpretation and display that are risky, subversive and mould-breaking to ensure that they get a far better return from their assets. The potential outcome is greater audience reach and financial sustainability through innovative ways of doing business. What we shouldn't do is stick to the tried and tested ways just to avoid visitor disaffection.

We need to look at issues such as whether it has been right to replace artefacts with popular interactives in an attempt to attract audiences while consigning our assets to the store cupboard and turning them into liabilities on the balance sheet.

As commercial income has traditionally come from catering, retail and premises use, where organisations have not already developed these income streams, realising assets could mean replacing a gallery with a tea room or galleries closing for a day-time hire. How will visitors judge this?

Conventional income streams alone are not going to overcome the financial crisis. Consideration will need to be given to charging for what has traditionally been free. More radically it could lead to lending to companies and even individuals or innovative shared services.

We have to ask if we can use our creativity in public programming with collections for commercial benefit, what untapped potential the collections hold and if we are prepared to think differently about how we work our assets for commercial gain. To ensure long-term survival just how far are we prepared to go? Will adopting a business view of our assets be liberating or will it prove to have been a step too far?

Janita Bagshawe is the head of museums and director of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton & Hove City Council. She is coordinating the Innovation, Creativity and Crisis theme at the MA conference: www.museumsassociation/conference

The insider

Tree-huggers and museum-huggers unite

Maev Kennedy

This may be where Russian Vine finally justifies its sorry existence: if we get planting today, and add in some Japanese knotweed and a nice bit of Hottentot fig, we should easily reach the roof by the end of August.

We might just manage to get a lawn to grow on that wretched terrace outside the cafe where nobody ever wants to sit because the wind keeps blowing the teapots off the tables, but it's so dark ivy might work better.

Then there are all those peculiar concrete balconies outside the windows that we never could get to open in the Millennium Wing. If we can just get the scouts to abseil down with some grobags and a few fistfulls of Miriam Rothschild Wildflower Meadow Mix (worth trying the Rothschilds for sponsorship?), game on.

We should probably try a bit of themed planting: that north end of the oriental gallery is so wet now it's worth trying a paddy field, a good patch of woad in the Early British wing could work very well – and could somebody ask Hampton Court if we could have a Great Vine cutting for the Romans?

Why would we do this you ask? I'll tell you why.

Is this a government minister talking about a museum? "Incredibly important to local life, which is why this government is committed to protecting them. These are special areas that invigorate communities."

Has a government task force just concluded that just living near a museum is so wonderful it can be valued at up to £300 per person every year?

And is the government proposing to give special powers to local people to protect their museums?

Don't be so silly, of course not. But the damned tree-huggers are getting special treatment from Mr Pickles and his cronies and it's about time we staked our claim.

So if it's green spaces they want, let's give it to them in wheelbarrows.

Just watch out for the Russian Vine, if it gets a tendril around the caretaker's neck, there's nobody else alive who knows how to keep the boiler going.

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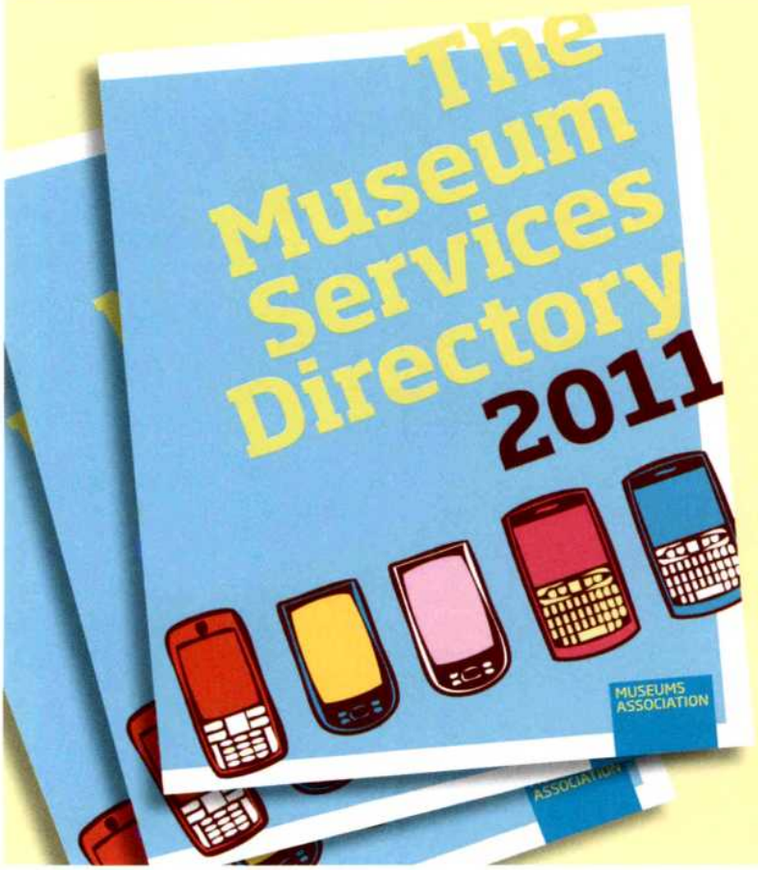
MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Museums Journal

July/August

As agreed by the Museums Association board last October, and in line with common publishing practice at this time of year, we are no longer printing an August issue of Museums Journal. Instead the July issue is a bumper edition and we will continue to deliver the latest news and information about the sector online.

Up to date news from Museums Journal and the Museums Association will be on the MA website as usual.
www.museumsassociation.org



MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

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Let's keep the intern debate in perspective

Janet Vitmayer

A poll on the Museums Association website has found that 71% of the sector believes that "unpaid internships in museums are exploitative". Amidst the emotive language, no one has stopped to clarify exactly what constitutes an intern.

The OED definition, "a student or trainee who works, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification", includes students who complete placements in order to gain qualifications. Do we believe this is exploitation?

For example, the Horniman Museum's recently reported 29 interns provoked censure; however, the vast majority were students attached to universities. Their work here formed an integral and compulsory part of their studies, giving them useful exposure to a museum environment and allowing them to develop their professional skills.

There exists a distinct and important difference between the internships that we offer to university students and the unpaid, unstructured internships into which young people are often lured by a putative promise of future employment.

In our stampede to condemn "bad" internships, we risk trampling over a well-oiled system that gives students the workplace experience they need in order to gain a valuable qualification, providing high-quality graduates to the sector. We consider this a responsibility that museums should do their best to accommodate, despite challenging times.

As a learning institution we take our responsibility towards students very seriously. Placements are for a pre-determined length of time; travel expenses are paid and student finance arrangements cover interns' living costs. Students are never given a false expectation that their placement will lead to a job here.

And what of internships that do not form part of a degree? We along with others are navigating a very difficult landscape in which many highly trained young people are desperately seeking internships in the hope of improving their employment chances. We accept that this creates a major challenge in terms of diversity. One ray of hope is the opening up of new funds to help support these young people. For the first time this year, we have been able to offer two salaried intern positions funded by third parties. The Institute of Conservation's Heritage Lottery Fund-supported scheme is a flagship in providing salaried workplace training.

Is there a danger amidst all the criticism that organisations will shy away from interns? Let's move the debate onto more constructive ground such as how can we encourage more funders to support future workplace diversity through salaried internships.

Janet Vitmayer is the chief executive of the Horniman Museum, London

From where I'm standing

Real community involvement should start at the top

Felicity Heywood

The Class is a French film based on a real event where a schoolteacher is tested by a class of underprivileged pupils. One of the main things that struck me about the situation was the pupils' presence at disciplinary board hearings for their peers. How open and refreshingly democratic, I thought. OK, it was a chaotic and challenging experience for the board but the will to allow new voices in and to take a risk was important.

I am in the camp that says museums primarily exist for people rather than the objects themselves. And with our smaller and local museums, that means, firstly, the community around them. Not only should an outreach manager be on the senior management team, but also a representative from a community partner should join them at board level. These people are the lifeblood of museums and should be treated as such.

I already sense the fear at this suggestion in some museums. But I think fear should be reserved for the damage being done and lack of progress within our institutions.

It concerns me that, according to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's recent report Whose Cake Is It Anyway, community involvement is still on the periphery of core museum work mainly because of short-term funding but also resistance at senior management level.

Add to this the slashing of outreach posts and we are left with even further community non-engagement.

The findings in this report are sadly nothing new. What the report does is to place a glaring light on the soiled landscape – cementing the fact that things aren't changing.

How the foundation will take things forward to activate organisational change will be known early in July. I hope there is a recommendation for community engagement at governance level. But there must be a caution here. Don't elect the community partner whose voice chimes with the museum. Instead, insist on those with strong voices who see things differently. With the right ground rules in place, it really could make our museums a better place.

Scottish university funding cuts not as bad as feared

Despite the cuts to their funding by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), university museums in Scotland continue to be optimistic (*Museums Journal June 2011, p13*).

The announcement followed a thorough review of funding in 2010, in which University Museums in Scotland (UMIS) was fully involved.

The review concluded that "funding should continue to be provided in support of museums, galleries and collections and that the SFC was the appropriate organisation to allocate this."

The SFC award letter also notes that, although it could not offer a guarantee, it is its intention to continue to provide this level of grant in future years. Recipient museums have also been heartened by the response of their host institutions, none of which have passed on the full impact of the cut to the museums, but continue to provide significant funding above the level of the SFC grants.

The headline of the Museums Journal article: "University Museums in Scotland Face 25% Cuts" is therefore far from the truth. Rather, Scottish universities are increasingly recognising the value of museums to their core aims of supporting research, teaching and public engagement.

Neil Curtis, convenor, University Museums in Scotland, senior curator, Marischal Museum, Aberdeen

Smart move

I was very pleased that Oliver Green enjoyed our new Living Worlds gallery at Manchester Museum, but I was sorry he missed the accompanying smartphone app (*Museums Journal June 2011, p40*).

This gives a virtual version of the gallery with very detailed information about the objects on display, along with suggestions for things people can do after their visit; it can be used as a gallery guide or separately.

This was an important development for us as it meant that we could provide people with lots of detail without the information cluttering up the gallery. Photographs of the living animals and plants come from a fantastic digital library called ARKive, connecting our specimens with the world beyond the museum.

The app draws information from our collections management system and we can readily change the text. The beauty of it is that we can continue to develop the content of the gallery without any additional costs. We will be adding short films to the app over the coming year, developed with a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Visitor services assistants have smartphone tablets in the gallery to show to visitors; those with their own smartphones can download the Living Worlds app for free from the Apple app store and Android app store.

Henry McGhie, head of collections and curator of zoology, honorary scientific associate in the faculty of life sciences, Manchester Museum

No competition

I find it extraordinary that yet again the organisers of the Art Fund Prize have chosen to oppose the public vote. Museums are for the public and not for the benefit of those operating these establishments from a managerial, purchasing or even an academic viewpoint. The two instances that I would highlight are the People's History Museum and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

In the first, although great public

Post dated

A postman delivering mail at Aston Villa football ground in 1935

ROYAL MAIL GROUP LTD / BPMA 2011

recognition was given to the People's History Museum, it was not shortlisted. The second is the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, which despite an overwhelming public vote in its favour still lost out to the British Museum. They are all excellent facilities but they are all here for the people and their vote should be paramount.

I would suggest that there is a parallel award, one based on the public vote and another for the appointed judges panel.
Reginald Tait, London

Cuts monitor online

A confidential online survey launched by the Museums Association has revealed the extent of funding cuts in the sector. Here are some responses from the Museums Association website.

I've been aware of the fact that the true picture of cuts to the museum sector has been hidden from the public for some time. My Save our Museums (UK) Facebook and Twitter page is posting, on average, a new story of sites at risk every day. The public seem very aware of the threats to libraries, but due to the fact that museums at risk usually receive no more than local media coverage, the true picture remains hidden.
Paul

The cuts are not only curtailing direct operations, services and opening hours they are also dealing a deep and longlasting blow to the specialist supply chain. It is important to recognise that exhibitions draw together designers, writers, animators, model makers, illustrators, programmers, actors and others. In turn, these commissions from the creative sector are often used to sustain an independent fine art practice. Do not underestimate the fall-out from the cuts – they extend way beyond the confines of the museum.
Katy

Join the debate:
www.museumsassociation.org/cuts

In the September issue of Museums Journal

- **The challenges of interpreting religious sites. By Simon Stephens**
- **Writers galleries are moving away from manuscripts and words on the wall, says Deborah Mulhearn**
- **Reviews of: Riverside Museum, Glasgow; Pablo Bronstein: Sketches for Regency Living, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Court on Canvas: Tennis in Art, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham**
- **Plus news, comment, letters, jobs and much more**

www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal

Museum Practice online

- **The July issue of Museum Practice will explore the latest developments in ticketing systems, including online ticketing and new technology. It will also look at the role of ticket sales in marketing and audience research.**

www.museumpractice.org

Vox pop

Should the core museums idea be scrapped?

Ged Bell *chairman, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums*

"There is a continuing logic for core museums that have a leading role in their wider area to deliver high level and broad outcomes and to provide elements of support to other museum organisations (although this was not articulated in the original New Renaissance, many of us have argued for this).

There is significant synergy with the core/transformation and National Portfolio/Grants for the Arts model. Some of the wider 'regional' roles that core museums will need to undertake are matched by the 'Bridge' responsibilities built into the funding of some NPOs to take on regional responsibility for work with young people. The proposals for New Renaissance, as currently articulated, are focused on ensuring maximum benefit from the investment in the Renaissance programme."

Peter Davies *cultural policy adviser, Canterbury City Council*

"Arts Council England made important changes to how it operates through the recent open submissions process for its National Portfolio scheme, which was challenging and developmental for all organisations that took part.

ACE now has a portfolio of organisations, large and small, who support the delivery of its strategy, deliver to wide and varied audiences and communities, and are seen as model organisations both geographically and within their specialisms and peer networks.

Museums need to replicate this, not by creating 'hubs with footfall', but by building local centres of excellence based on agreed criteria and strategic fit, rewarding museum impact rather than its size, and sector development rather than polarised growth."

Maurice Davies *head of policy and communication, Museums Association*

"Core museums will cause muddle and pointless complexity. They will create division and needless hierarchy. Other hub museums will lose funds, so their audiences will suffer.

Astonishingly, no one has told us why we might want core museums. The Renaissance review simply recommends that we should have them, with very little justification. The subsequent New Renaissance paper from MLA has less than a page about them. The idea was to pilot them in one or two places but this didn't happen.

The lack of detail and testing is appalling when you think they might consume £10m-£20m a year. Far better for ACE to run an open application process that could result in perhaps 70-100 museums getting regular funding."

Victoria Barlow *manager, Wiltshire Conservation and Heritage*

"Core museums were proposed by Renaissance to clear up the mess left by hubs. The proposal wasn't fully formed and it was never really clear who the core museums would be. There were suggestions about Designation and size of visitation but no sense of how they would benefit anyone but themselves.

No system will please everyone but core museums would please no one. ACE doesn't even have to look far for a scheme which would suit museums well. The system of NPOs backed up with something like Grant for Arts wouldn't need too much tweaking to work for us. The criteria for a good arts organisation translate easily to museums and support in areas like participation would be very welcome."

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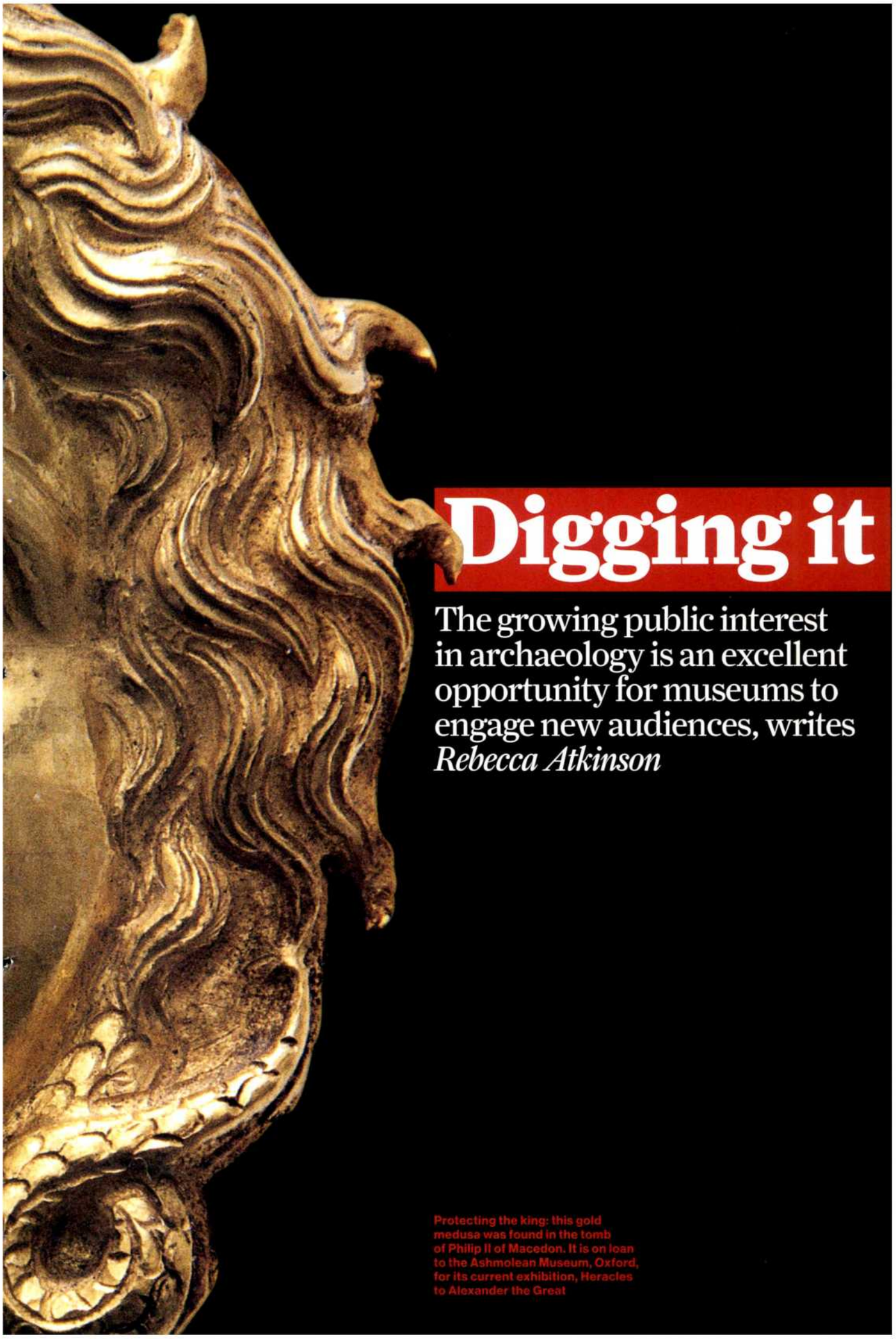


Digging it

The growing public interest in archaeology is an excellent opportunity for museums to engage new audiences, writes *Rebecca Atkinson*

Protecting the king: this gold medusa was found in the tomb of Philip II of Macedon. It is on loan to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for its current exhibition, Heracles to Alexander the Great

When the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology reopened last year following a £61m redevelopment, it was praised for shrugging off its reputation as an academics-only museum and allowing visitors to connect with its collections, whatever their background.

This summer the museum is hosting its first major archaeological exhibition in its new temporary exhibition galleries, Heracles to Alexander the Great: Treasures from the Royal Capital of Macedon, A Hellenic Kingdom in the Age of Democracy (see p25). Showcasing hoards of treasure and weapons recently found in the royal burial tombs and the palace of Aegae, the ancient capital of Macedonia, the exhibition will appeal to people keen to see these new discoveries on display for the first time outside of Greece.

From fantasy figures such as Indiana Jones and Lara Croft to factual approaches such as Channel 4's Time Team and BBC's Hands on History website, archaeology continues to capture the public imagination.

This interest presents a great opportunity for museums, many of which boast rich archaeology collections. But despite this, some practitioners feel that museum archaeology displays remain rooted in the past.

"Museums have tended to be relatively traditional in how they present archaeology, with objects displayed in glass cases and explained using text-heavy panels," says Council for British Archaeology director Mike Heyworth. "The difficultly with this approach is that people don't understand what objects are or what they were used for."

The past decade has seen some small but significant changes. TV programmes such as Time Team highlight the emotional impact of discovering and touching objects found in digs, and museums have tried to recreate this by offering handling opportunities to visitors. Museum of London Archaeology runs a range of archaeological events, from community digs to finds handling sessions. Elsewhere, Yorkshire Museum allows visitors to walk over a four-metre square Roman mosaic floor, giving them a visceral connection to the past.

Tim Schadla-Hall, reader in public archaeology at University College London (UCL), says: "Archaeology displays need to emphasise how we think about the past, but many galleries miss the opportunity because they aren't innovative enough."

Most archaeological displays are chronological, helping people understand the different periods from the stone age through to classical antiquity. This also links to the process of archaeology; the Ashmolean's current exhibition, for example, works backwards in time to mirror the way objects are dug out of the ground.

> 'Many do not know if the Romans or the Saxons came first'

However, surveys suggest that the average person is unable to visualise the past beyond their parents and grandparents.

"Chronological displays, where visitors start at the most distant point in time, are nonsense and do not help anyone," says David Clarke, the recently retired keeper of archaeology at National Museums Scotland (NMS). "A lot of people don't know whether the Romans came before the Vikings; but they also don't care because these things happened a long time ago."

When NMS was creating its Early People Gallery, which opened 12 years ago at the National Museum of Scotland, it did not use chronological displays. "We tried to focus on the museum's ability to tell certain stories rather than offer a comprehensive survey of history," says Clarke.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museums Wales (NMW) is considering this approach for its archaeology collections, which are being relocated to St Fagans as part of a ▶

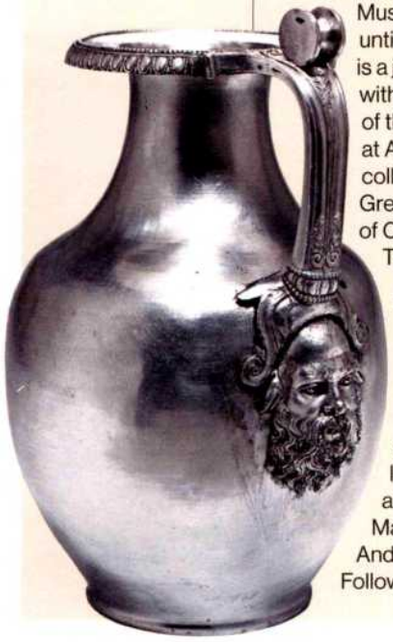
© MUSEUM OF LONDON (BOWL) © MUSEUM OF LONDON ARCHAEOLOGY (DIG)

Above: a 17th-century tin glazed bowl uncovered by Museum of London archaeologists at Borough. Left: an excavation organised by Museum of London Archaeology

In the footsteps of Alexander

Treasures from Macedon: clay busts, an ivory inlay and a silver wine jug are among more than 500 Greek items loaned to the Ashmolean Museum

Heracles to Alexander the Great: Treasures from the Royal Capital of Macedon, A Hellenic Kingdom in the Age of Democracy, which runs at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford until 29 August, is a joint venture with the Museum of the Royal Tombs at Aegae and in collaboration with Greece's Ministry of Culture And Tourism.



The Royal Tombs and Museum of Aegae, in Vergina, Greece, showcase the life's work of archaeologist Manolis Andronikos. Following a visit to the site as a student before the second world war, he returned in the 1950s to begin a systematic excavation of the ancient city.

However, it wasn't until the late 1970s that the team discovered a series of graves beneath the great tumulus of Vergina, one of which is believed to be the tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great and king of Macedon from 359BC until his assassination in 336BC.

The museum is a subterranean structure, which allows visitors to see the tombs and recovered artefacts in their actual location. The site became a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1996.

The Ashmolean is showcasing more than 500 treasures made of gold, silver and bronze found in the royal burial tombs and the palace. The exhibition is split into three main themes: the role of weapons and the military; the leading role of queens, princesses and high-priestesses; and life in the palace based on its architecture and the tradition of banqueting.

Susan Walker, keeper of Greek and Roman antiquities at the Ashmolean, says: "The exhibition has a simple concept of introducing visitors to the family of Alexander the Great and the last kings of Macedonia. We want visitors to understand the society that produced these great men who create a vast empire and changed the world."

Connecting people to their cultural heritage

A 36% annual increase in archaeological finds recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in 2010 (to 90,146) suggests a growing interest among members of the public in "treasure hunting".

Notable finds last year include an unusual Roman knife handle (pictured, right) from AD c.43-c.410. The handle, found by David Barker in Lincolnshire, depicts a male and female locked in an embrace as well as another male holding a decapitated head. The object, which was acquired by the Collection, Lincoln, is one of just a handful of erotic knife handles known in Britain.

Culture minister Ed Vaizey says: "[The PAS is] cost effective, it works and it's probably the envy of the rest of the world. It connects amateurs and experts, and ensures that what is uncovered underground gets recorded, gets researched and, importantly, often gets displayed to the public."

£20m redevelopment. Mark Redknap, acting keeper of archaeology and numismatics, says: "Sequences are important as they show how one society develops from another, but perhaps absolute dates do not need to be presented upfront. Most people understand issues through themes, so the question for us is what is the best way to do this."

Redknap also hopes that the new displays at St Fagans will acknowledge different voices and interpretations of objects. "There's an opportunity for St Fagans to become a museum that has a dialogue with people and involves them in making history," he explains.

This is part of a wider move by some museums to examine the social and political history of archaeology practice, and link this to the objects on display.

At UCL Museums and Collections, a recent project called QRator uses QR codes to allow visitors to view information via their mobile phones and, notably, send back their own interpretation. One object included is on display in the Petrie Museum's current exhibition, Typecast: Flinders Petrie and Francis Galton (until 22 December), which examines the impact of racial theory on archaeology. Debbie Challis, audience development officer at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, part of UCL, says that by inviting opinion on the object with a view to incorporating this into exhibition labels, the museum is acknowledging that sometimes members of the public can contribute just as much to the understanding of an object as the "experts".

Elsewhere in the museum, text panels are less focused on what Challis calls "archaeological showmanship", relating to where and when objects were found. Instead, they highlight how our understanding of objects has changed as new finds and research constantly come to light.

Physical and digital reconstructions are also helping bring the past alive. In the Ashmolean, the elaborate funeral jewellery garb of five Macedonian queens found in an undisturbed tomb has been reconstructed and displayed upright rather than horizontally. Susan Walker, keeper of Greek and Roman antiquities at the Ashmolean, says: "This gives people a sense of actually meeting these women and importantly it presents them as individuals."

NMS is working with craft people to create versions of ancient objects as they might have looked when new.

> 'A museum that does not acquire objects is a dead museum'

But this sort of work is expensive, and funding cuts could scupper the recent progress made.

The budget for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, for example, has been cut by 15% from £1.412m in 2010-11 to £1.323m in 2014-15. The scheme's director, Roger Bland, is hopeful that finds officer posts will all be retained but, in a blow to Welsh museums, the scheme is to be restricted to England from April 2012.

Bland says core funding cuts pose the most serious threat to archaeology displays – with acquisition budgets particularly vulnerable.

The British Museum has cut its total annual acquisitions budget from £300,000 to £100,000. So while public interest in archaeology is high, thanks to spectacular finds such as the Staffordshire Hoard, fewer museums will be in a position to acquire objects.

The impact of this is worrying. "A museum that doesn't acquire is a dead museum," says Bland.

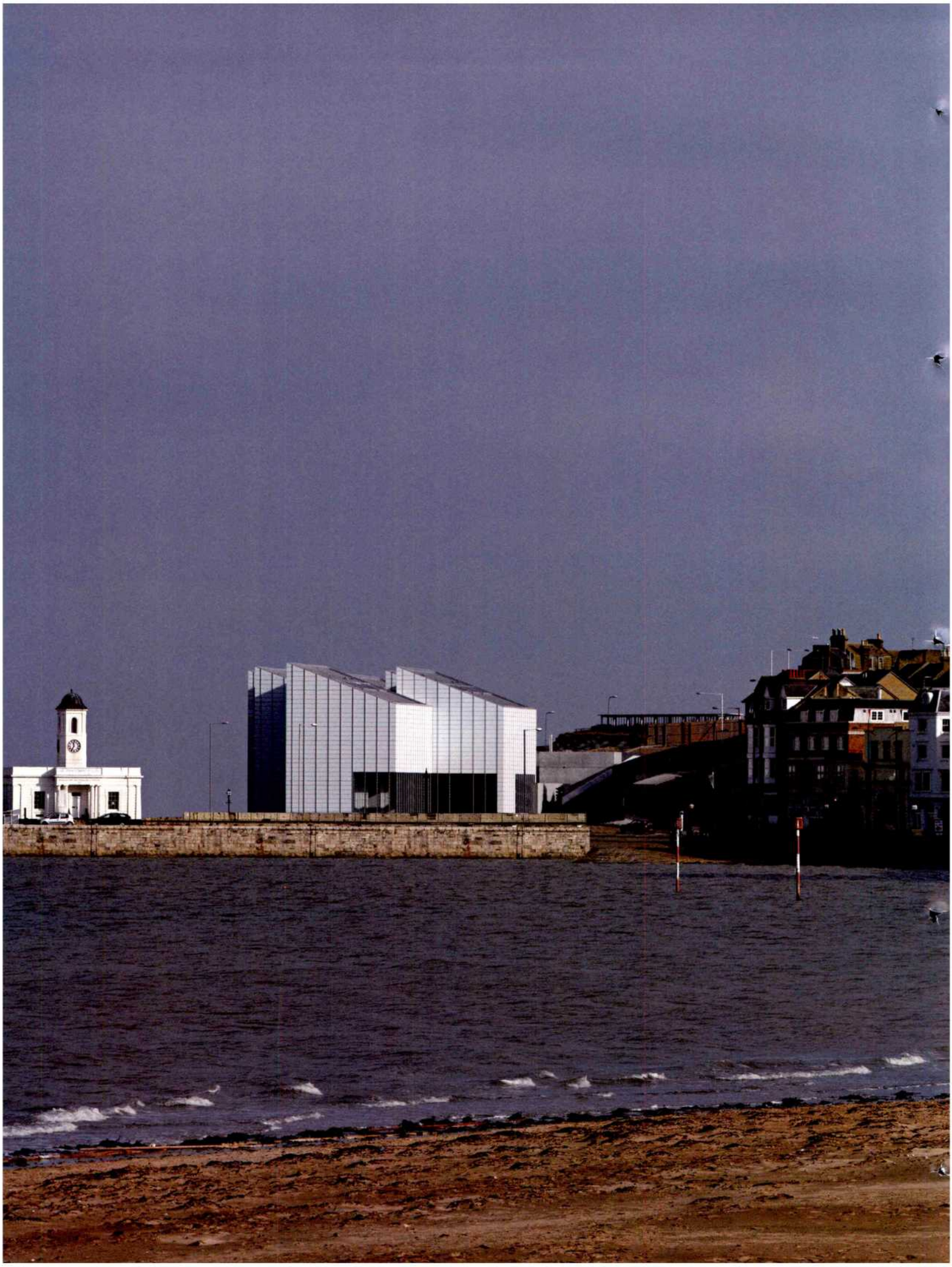
Earlier this year the Museum of London confirmed it was looking to set up Museum of London Archaeology (MoLA) as a standalone charity, a move that would give it "greater commercial potential", and was also considering whether to introduce charges for the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre.

Regional archaeology services are also under pressure. At Hampshire County Council's museum service, David Allen is now the only curator of archaeology left. "We've got a great collection and people who want to come and see it, but it's a question of keeping things like knowledge and quality," he says. "Without those, there is no substance to the stories we tell – they are just fairy tales."

The Festival of British Archaeology takes place from 16-31 July. http://festival.britarch.ac.uk

© NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND (TORCS, EARLY PEOPLE GALLERY)

Left: a treasure trove of iron-age gold torcs discovered near Stirling last year is now on display at the National Museum of Scotland. Right: the Early People Gallery at the National Museum of Scotland focuses on stories rather than chronology



Last resort?

From traditional end-of-the-pier shows to modern art festivals, can culture turn the tide of decline and get people flocking back to our seaside towns? By *John Holt*

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With its grand hotels, sparkling spa complex and lofty perch atop a limestone cliff, Scarborough has the well-to-do air of a classy coastal community and desirable holiday hotspot.

But there are other facets to the town the tourist websites don't mention: areas of shocking deprivation – including two of the most rundown wards in Europe – poor education and housing and, anecdotally at least, the cheapest heroin in the country.

"A lot of people come here when they are released from prison, either to check out its drugs reputation or simply because they are given a train ticket and head for the seaside because they have happy memories of it," says Shirley Collier, chief executive of Scarborough Museums Trust.

"There's a lot happening 'under the radar'. We certainly don't really have the ABC1 museum-going population that people might expect."

Like many other seaside towns, Scarborough has struggled to recover from the loss of kiss-me-quick thrill seekers to cheap foreign travel since the late 1970s.

There's a feeling of isolation about the place. This could be because of poor transport links – the main road to York is still single carriageway for half its 40 miles – or the plain fact that, as Collier describes it, seaside towns often feel they're both geographically and demographically "at the end of the line".

In recent years, however, there have been efforts at encouraging a cultural shift. The new local campus of Hull University began to attract a young generation of web and graphic designers looking to start their own businesses with promises of professional nurturing and purpose-built studio spaces.

This was followed by a culturally-inspired, European Union-funded Urban Renaissance project, which – as well as providing much-needed new sea defences and harbour infrastructure – also supported the £4.4m restoration of the town's Rotunda Museum.

Community pride

"Culture can certainly play a part in turning a place around, in that it's all about looking outwards, using your imagination and learning new things. Seaside towns are never going to be about manufacturing – they need culture to give them a sense of place, which is what regeneration is all about," says Collier, who believes the secret lies in personalising your offer.

"People round here can be resistant to stuff coming in from outside. A lot of urban centres wouldn't feel patronised about art arriving from London, for example. But the people here prefer to get behind the 'Scarboroughness' of something."

To that end, Scarborough has initiated its own biennial cultural extravaganza – Coastival – which invites folk from all over Yorkshire to the town every other winter to enjoy arts of all kinds. The event has a distinct focus on community participation and pride in the town.

"It's made Scarborough people see themselves differently," says Collier. "Identifying potential is the key to regeneration wherever you are."

Like Scarborough, Folkestone on England's south coast fell spectacularly from grace when the tourists stopped coming. The Kent town's economic woes were further exacerbated by the decimation of the channel ferry and local fishing industries.

Once a glamorous destination dominated by Victorian cliff-top hotels, Folkestone became blighted by soaring unemployment, some of the worst schools in the country, record levels of teenage pregnancies and night-time no-go areas around the rundown harbour.

Seven years ago, however, a transformation began when philanthropist Roger de Haan started ploughing back into the town some of the millions of pounds he received when he sold the Folkestone-based Saga Group, which provides services to the over-50s. ▶

Left: it is hoped that Turner Contemporary will help revive Margate's fortunes. Above: the new exhibition spaces can take large installations such as Daniel Buren's Borrowing and Multiplying the Landscape

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Left: John Piper's Beach Scene is part of the Towner Art Gallery's collection of 4,000 artworks. Right: the Towner reopened in 2009 in an iconic new building

He charged his new Creative Foundation with the task of encouraging a Folkestone facelift, making it a place fit for a brand new community of artists who are tempted to relocate by cheap accommodation and studio space that is a 50-minute train ride from London.

Seaside philanthropy

"Culture is the locomotive of the whole regeneration process," says the foundation's Andrea Schlieker, co-curator of British Art Show 6 and former Turner Prize juror, who now oversees the Folkestone Triennial art show.

"The town, for example, used to have an unbelievably bad secondary school, but I work closely with the new Folkestone Academy, an out-of-this-world place designed by Norman Foster," Schlieker says. "I have never actually seen a facility like it.

"Now there's also a university centre specialising in arts, culture and business for young talented people who, in previous times, simply had to move away to get on," Schlieker adds.

Alongside a new performing arts centre called the Quarterhouse, the foundation is transforming properties in the old harbour area for use by the cultural industries.

But local reaction has been mixed, says Schlieker.

"Some people are very sceptical and say it's too late to lift Folkestone out of its misery, but others are really excited. The triennial obviously contributes a high footfall in the town, with more people going to hotels, cafes and bars and more businesses evolving as a result.

"There is still no public gallery or museum so I thought the idea of placing art in the street or on the beach would work," Schlieker says, "A lot of people are still scared by contemporary art, but put it in front of their noses, so to speak, and they become directly involved."

The first Folkestone Triennial left eight permanent works around the town from the likes of Tracey Emin and Mark Wallinger. It is hoped that this year's second event will provide similar long-lasting landmarks and talking points; top of the list is Cornelia Parker's bronze Folkestone Mermaid – modelled by a local aerobics instructor and mother-of-two – which will look out to sea from Sunny Sands.

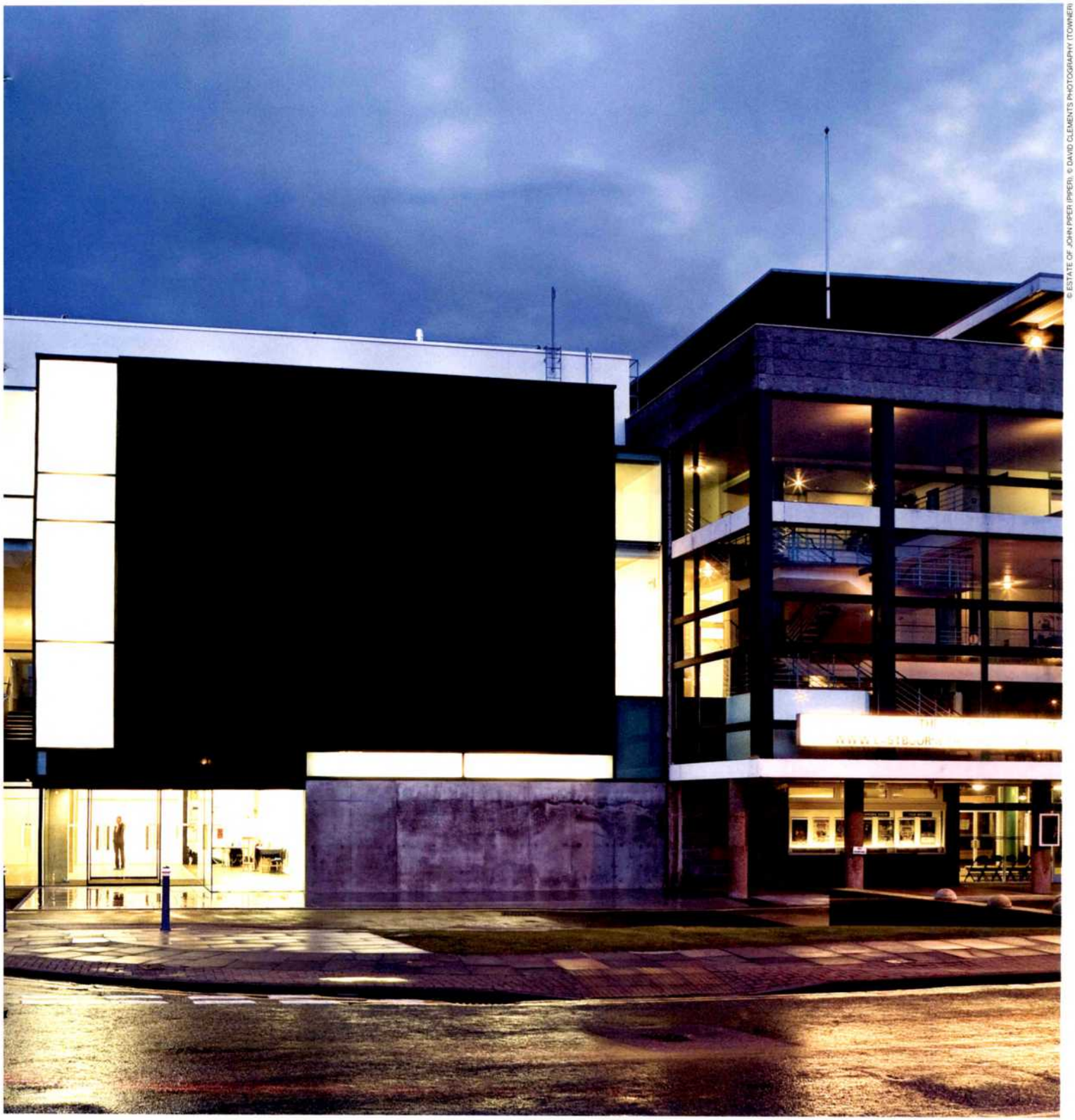
Properly constructed and cared-for in the community, culture can make a real impact in improving a town down on its luck, says Schlieker.

"But there have been examples of regeneration where art has simply been used as a decoy," she says. "It's very deceitful when artists are settled into a quarter or a trendy street before being turfed out to make way for expensive apartments once the area has been cleaned up. Here, there's a true commitment to culture and the difference it can make."

In East Sussex, seaside philanthropy was in full effect back in the 1920s when Alderman Towner donated some paintings to the good townsfolk of Eastbourne with the aim of complementing their fresh air and fun with some morally fibrous Victorian narrative.

Over the years, the admirable collection grew to some 4,000 pieces including work ▶

'Galleries have a fantastic ability to re-energise the communities on their doorsteps'
Matthew Rowe, director, Towner, Eastbourne



© ESTATE OF JOHN PIPER (PIPER). © DAVID CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY (TOWNER)

© TONY BARTHOLOMEW (ROTUNDA COLLIER) © THIERRY BALL (PARKER)

Left: Scarborough's Rotunda is part of Yorkshire's Coastival, a biennial celebration of the region's arts. Right: Cornelia Parker's Folkestone Mermaid is a permanent legacy of the town's second triennial, which runs until 25 September

by Picasso, Henry Moore and Eric Ravilious, who taught at the town's old school of art. Two years ago, the Towner Art Gallery reopened in a brand new Rick Mather-designed building under the leadership of Matthew Rowe, who's becoming something of a dab hand at the regeneration game.

As an assistant curator at the new Tate St Ives in Cornwall back in 1993, he took part in the transformation of the Cornish settlement from out-of-season ghost town into an all-year-round visitor must-see.

Cultural regeneration

Rowe has brought that experience to Eastbourne, which is now repositioning itself as a cutting-edge cultural destination, with the Towner and its burgeoning reputation helping to attract considerable outside investment. This is quite a change from the town's traditional image as a world-weary conference centre with an ageing, conservative population.

"Galleries have a fantastic ability to re-energise the communities on their doorsteps," says Rowe, who has overseen a programme of community projects aimed at local people at risk of social exclusion.

"It may be as simple as encouraging some back into formal education or enabling them to display their own artwork in their own residential areas," Rowe says. "There is a real social function to this kind of regeneration in seaside towns where the population comes and goes."

Scheduling a gallery programme that appeals to all these disparate groups, summer tourists and art lovers can be a bit of a challenge, Rowe admits.

But he says that like Tate St Ives, the Towner has an advantage in that its collection can form the basis for learning programmes and links with schools and community groups.

"To engage new audiences, we counterbalance traditional work with national and international contemporary artists in charging and free exhibitions. I think we're continuing the work of Alderman Towner in terms of both making the town a welcoming and sustainable place and ensuring people feel comfortable when they come into contact with visual art.

"The south coast has long suffered from being in the shadow of London and the fact that it missed out to the north in the first round of lottery money," Rowe says. "We're now a significant region for the arts and the advantages that they bring."

A sea change is certainly in the air along the shoreline; recent developments include the restored De La Warr Pavilion leading a revamp of the seafront at Bexhill, the Jerwood Foundation's plans to create a new home for its collection in Hastings, and the galloping gentrification of Brighton with the refurbishment of the Dome, and a new library and media centre.

Over in Margate, the Turner Contemporary is now making waves in the local community and the wider arts world, but its voyage of discovery hasn't always been plain sailing.

Victoria Pomery has been director since 2002 and has witnessed the ebbs and flows at first hand.

"There have been downs, such as the first scheme not happening on schedule, but the ups have included learning from that experience, carrying out more audience development and taking the chance to think about what works in a difficult funding climate," she says.

"The years of Margate's decay and decline had taken a massive toll on the people – there are some huge social challenges and some very low aspirations," Pomery says. "But there's a positivity and energy about the place again. It seemed the whole town came out to celebrate our opening in an outpouring of civic pride."

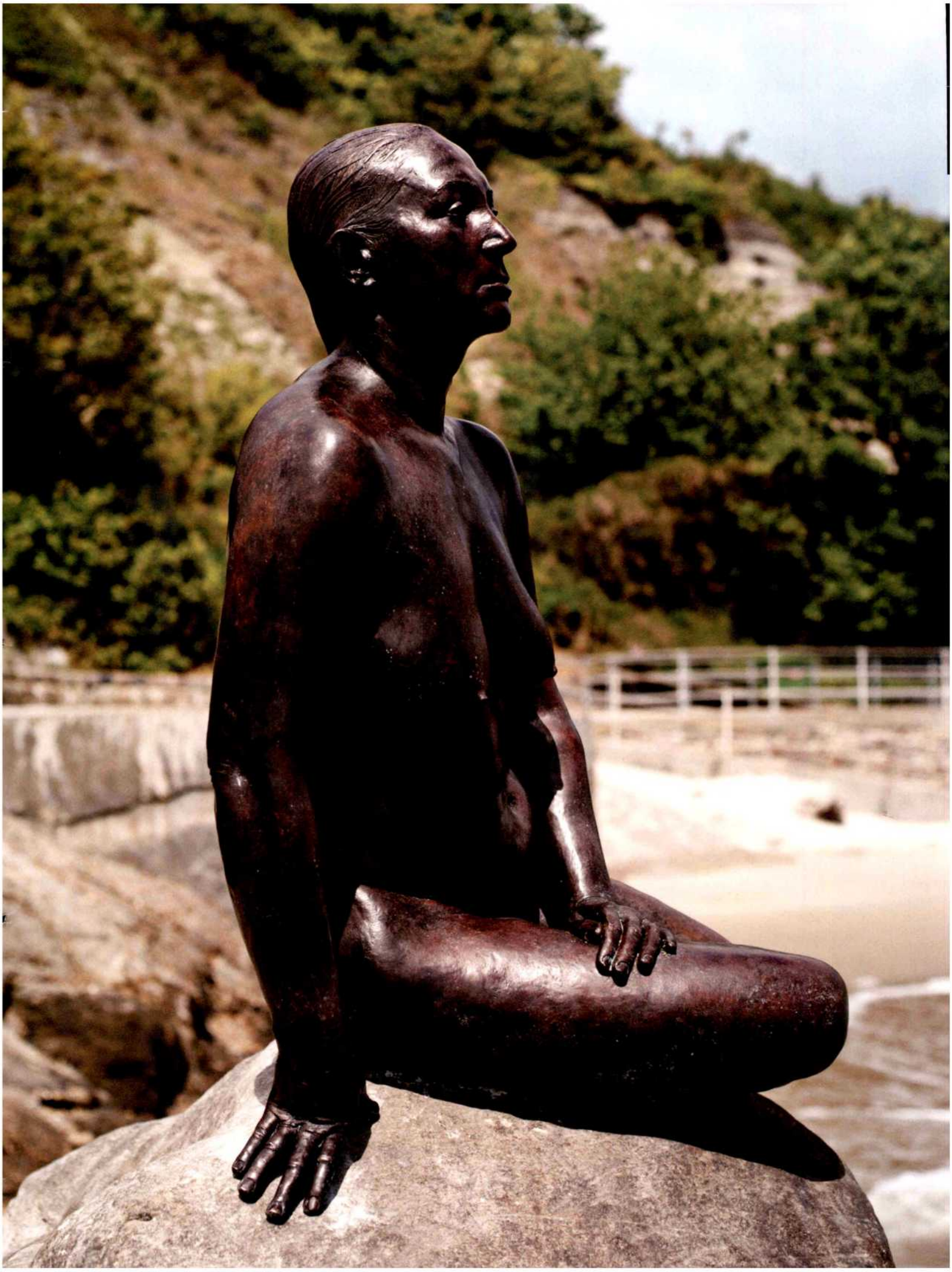
Culture in itself cannot transform the fortunes of a town, but it can be a significant catalyst for change, says Pomery, who also sits on the board of the Margate Renewal Partnership, a taskforce charged with rejuvenating the area through a mixture of modern creative thinking and traditional seaside attractions.

There are plans, for example, to open a new version of the famous Dreamland amusement park complete with the kind of old-fashioned rides that thrilled tourists in the golden age of holidays at the coast.

"Seaside towns are special places," says Pomery. "They can be nostalgic on one level, quite melancholic on another. But they are also full of potential and opportunity."

John Holt is a freelance journalist.
See Turner Contemporary review, p46.
This year's Museums Association conference takes place in Brighton on 3-4 October.
www.museumsassociation.org/conference

'Seaside towns need culture to give them a sense of place'
Shirley Collier, chief executive, Scarborough Museums Trust



It was Amy Sanders' accumulation of her own festival experiences – slime, grime, foul food – that made her realise that June's annual Glastonbury festival was "just perfect" for a museum intervention. "Glastonbury is renowned for its filth, its dirt, its mud and awful loos – we had to go," says Sanders, the programmer of the Wellcome Trust's Dirt season, which includes an exhibition at the Wellcome Collection in London as well as a wide range of events and activities elsewhere.

The Wellcome Collection is one of many museums and galleries that sees the UK's summer music and arts festivals as ripe with opportunities to reach new audiences.

For some years, the organisers of the main festivals (of which Glastonbury, with a site capacity of 177,500, is the largest) have programmed much more than the music stages on which they built their reputations. These days any festival worth its salt, and its hefty ticket price, offers a huge range of activities – theatre, literature tents, children's activities and comedy arenas – to its visitors, in addition to the big-name acts.

Sanders approached the Glastonbury organisers with a proposal to bring something Dirt-related to the festival.

"We went to the team who organise Glastonbury's Shangri-La field as we liked the futuristic, dystopic city narrative approach it had created for this area," she says. "The team was up for it, but it had no science background. That's when we linked up with Guerrilla Science, an organisation that the Wellcome has funded before, to create entertainment that would be firmly based in science."

Guerrilla Science, a science education and performance organisation, had visited numerous festivals in the past doing small-scale talks on topics such as quantum physics, rocket science and chemistry, and delivering what founding member Zoe Cormier calls "science by surprise".

"A lot of people perceive science as boring and this is usually because it's not taught well," says Cormier. "We try to make science inspiring and unconventional."

In this spirit, Guerrilla Science created an extraordinary scenario for this year's Glastonbury, even by the hallucinatory standards of music festivals. A storyline of a mass virus outbreak was formed and stories fed to the Glastonbury website: "2011 sees the population preparing to flee," ran one blog headline.

In the Shangri-La area, Guerrilla Science built a two-storey decontamination unit manned by real microbiologists wearing hazard suits loaned by the science research centre at Porton Down in Salisbury, and three ▶

© RICHARD TAILBY (DERBY); © ROBERT WHITWORTH (LATITUDE)

Main picture: Derby Museum and Art Gallery rolls out the old radios for the Vintage festival. Left: Latitude has pioneered a multi-arts strand and last year created its own contemporary art prize

Fields of dreams

Every summer the UK goes festival-mad and some museums are making sure they get in on the act, as *Louise Gray* finds out

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Below: a banquet organised by Guerilla Science as part of the Wellcome Trust's Dirt season

Right: an outdoor installation at the Latitude festival, which takes place each year in Suffolk

psychiatrists from north London. The construction was coated with a light-sensitive paint that showed up under UV lighting.

"Visitors were put through either physical or moral decontamination procedures," explains Cormier. Swabs were taken from visitors' necks, cultures grown in Petrie dishes and in area called the Shame Drain, festival goers urged to confide their dirty secrets to a black box recorder. "These secrets were then broadcast – via a voice modulator – all over the festival," Cormier says. The decontaminated were then invigorated with a dose of vodka.

Reaching new audiences

Festivals are a good way to get hold of the people that museums might not ordinarily reach. For organisations such as Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (NMW), this kind of outreach has become essential. NMW is attending four Welsh festivals this season: the Hay Festival (26 May-5 June), the Urdd Eisteddfod (30 May-4 June), the Royal Welsh Show (18-21 July) and the National Eisteddfod (30 July-6 August). The organisation sees this kind of participation as a means of raising its profile.

"We've found that it's useful to have a presence at these shows," says Robin Gwyn, the director of communications at NMW. "They provide a good advocacy opportunity to meet other people – locals who might not ordinarily come to museums, tourists, and to make introductions."

The varied nature of these Welsh festivals allows the seven museums within NMW to concentrate on different aspects of their work. At the agricultural show, NMW will focus on scientific research. And at Hay, where it shared a stand with Hanes Cymru – History Wales; Cadw, the Welsh government's historic environment division; the Historic Houses Association; and the academic group History Research Wales, NMW took the opportunity to promote the Welsh National Museum of Art, opening this month, and to launch Discovered in Time, a book by its acting keeper of archaeology and numismatics Mark Redknap.

It's also a strategic move, Gwyn says. "The national media come down to Hay in their droves. That means we have them on our doorstep and it's a good opportunity to talk about what Wales has to offer culturally."

As festivals have shed their perceived image of weekend-long bacchanals and become more family-friendly, so space has opened up for activities appealing to a wider range of people. Latitude, held each July in the grounds of Henham Hall in Suffolk, has championed the multi-arts approach ever since its inception in 2006 – the Royal Opera House, the National Theatre and Sadler's Wells have all appeared on its various stages. At this year's Latitude, Tate Britain, in collaboration with the Shunt performance collective, will present a three-hour event that has been inspired by the gallery's current Watercolour exhibition.

Tate also appeared at the Big Chill in 2010: "We recognised that the Big Chill and Latitude were essentially attracting the same type of people – articulate, engaged people interested in how culture shapes society – as those who visit art galleries," says Melvin Benn, managing director of Festival Republic, which runs festivals and events throughout the UK and Europe, including Latitude and the Big Chill.

Latitude has gone one further in its commissioning process by developing its own £10,000 art prize, where artists create new work that is sited in a woodland area of the festival. Latitude Contemporary Art (LCA) was launched last year by Benn as a way of developing a professional strand of contemporary art within the festival.

"I wanted art from recognised emerging artists to be given the same platform as young musicians in popular culture," says Benn.

The inaugural prize was taken by Moth Theatre, an entertainment "for moths, by moths" says winner Graeme Miller, a London-based artist with a track record of making work in unusual places. This year's five LCA-commissioned artists are Alice Anderson, who recently tied the exterior of London's Freud Museum in ropes of hair, Delaine Le Bas, Graham Dolphin, Andy Harper and Maslen & Mehra.

Learning new skills

Jonathan Wallis, the assistant head of museums at Derby Museums and Art Gallery, believes that developing the skills to work in new environments – festivals included – is key to museum survival. At the end of this month, staff from Derby will travel to the Royal Festival Hall, London, to join in the Vintage festival (29-31 July).

"We're partnering Charity Shop DJ, a local outfit that works with community organisations to break down barriers and we will dress the venue with objects from our collection," Wallis says. "In the past, Derby has brought hundreds of vintage radios out as decoration and this year it is going to make wallpaper festooned with the image of Derby artist Joseph Wright – and invite various celebrities to be interviewed on our stage."

It's all good clean fun, but what does Derby get out of participating in a London event? Several things, says Wallis. "Firstly, we are revisiting our collections by doing this, and secondly, we are telling people about Derby." He points out that the museum will be bringing a local theatre group with them to the South Bank as well as other Derby-based artists.

There is, however, a serious point to all this. "Museums face uncertain years to come; we all know that we have to diversify our income streams," Wallis says. "We need to practise our creative skills and encourage others to do so. It could be important for our future."

Louise Gray is a freelance arts journalist

Tony Butler at a glance

Tony Butler started his career in 1996 as a temporary assistant curator of social history at Wakefield Museum. He then worked at the National Postal Museum before becoming the curator of human history at Isle of Wight Museums Service in 1999. From here he moved to Ipswich Museums Service, where he became its public services manager.

He was appointed director of the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, in 2004.

Butler took part in the Clore Leadership Programme in 2007 and was mentored by Michael Day, the chief executive of Historic Royal Palaces.

He is a board member of the Association of Independent Museums, vice-chairman of the UK Rural Museums Network and is an Associate of the Museums Association.

Social work

As work on the Museum of East Anglian Life's capital project continues, its director, Tony Butler, tells *Simon Stephens* why progress at the organisation has been about much more than just bricks and mortar. Photographs by *Phil Sayer*

Shortly after Tony Butler arrived at the Museum of East Anglian Life (Meal) as its new director he sat in his living room and wondered what he'd let himself in for.

"The museum was known for being in really bad shape," Butler says. "We had more horses than computers at the time, there was no infrastructure and the money did not stack up."

Butler says the museum, which was created in the late 1960s, had been seen as quite cutting edge but had been declining for some time. Before his arrival in 2004, its funding partners had been threatening to pull the plug unless the museum reviewed its governance arrangements and appointed a new director.

Butler joined after working in museums for nearly ten years, but Meal was his first director's job. He says it quickly became clear that he needed to get the business on a firmer footing, address some collections issue and take better control of the organisation's assets.

The completion of a £3m capital development project in March 2012 will be tangible evidence of how he has turned the museum's fortunes around. But many of his achievements have not been about bricks and mortar at all; they have been related to investing in people. ▶

"I have always been influenced by asset-based community development, which is used in the rural development sector, where you try and understand your assets in a broader sense," says Butler. "So it's not just the buildings and collections, but also the social networks that are built up within your organisation."

What this means in practice is the development of programmes that encourage the broadest possible participation by the community. This has led to the creation of a range of projects, such as a work-based learning programme for long-term unemployed people.

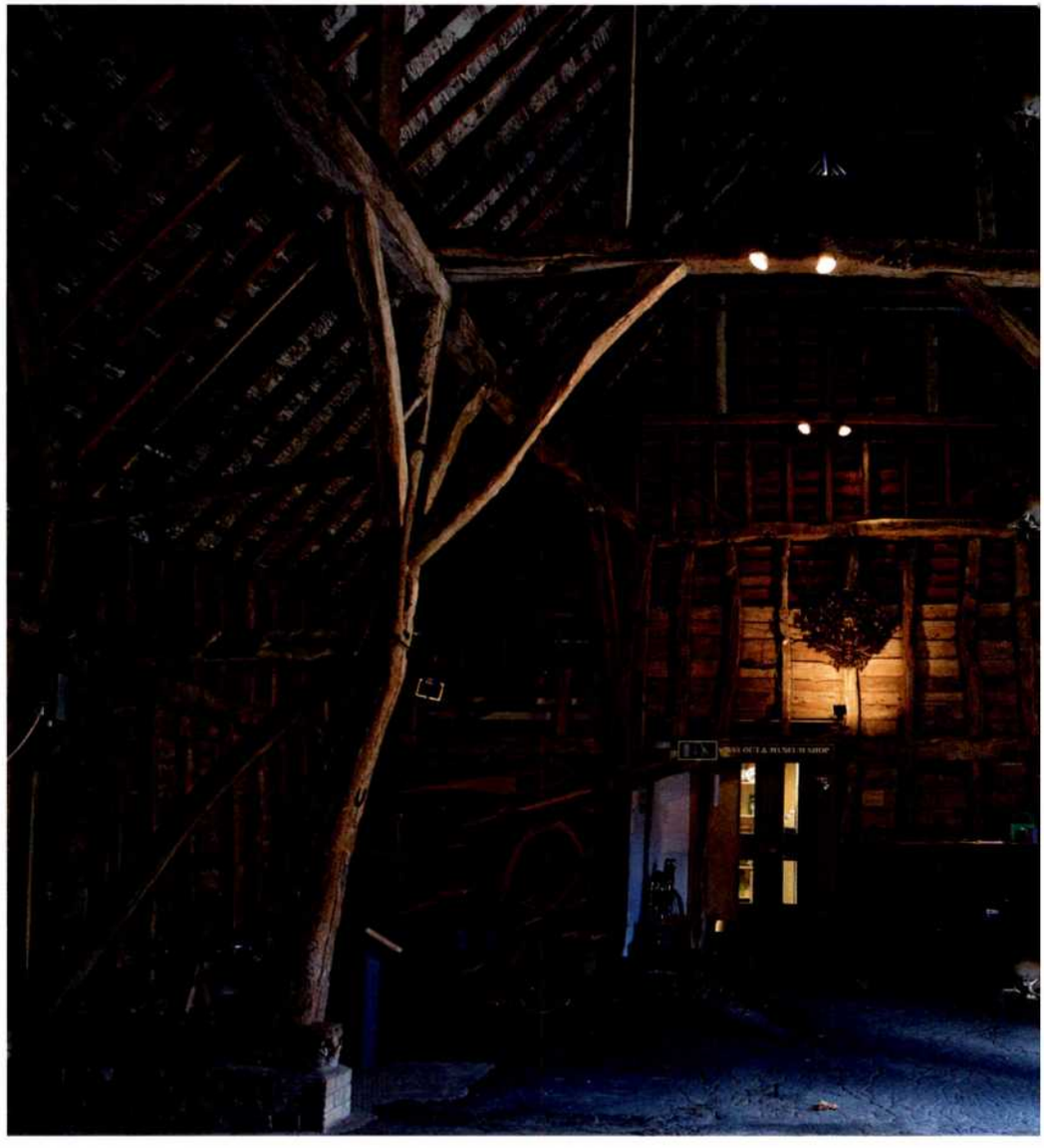
Butler says that his work has been inspired by people such as Iain Tuckett, who runs Coin Street Community Builders, a social enterprise that started 20 years when local residents attempted to turn a bleak area on London's South Bank into a better place to live. Meal is a social enterprise itself, which means that its social purpose is central to what it does.

"We have all these assets – there are 80 acres here, 16 historic buildings and 40,000 objects in the collection," says Butler. "Using these for social good is a really important driving factor in what we do."

The successes of the museum can be shown in a number of ways. It is now on a sound financial footing, has a broad range of income streams and the ongoing capital project. There are 14 full-time staff, compared with four when Butler joined, and about 140 volunteers.

Butler has also been keen to prove the value of the museum's social programmes. The Investing in Culture and Community report assessed the social return on the museum's investment in work-based learning in 2009-10. The report found that Meal generated £4.30 of social value for every £1 invested.

"Through all of this we feel there is a strong need to demonstrate what we do, so it is not just standing up in conferences and saying aren't we brilliant, here are some nice pictures of happy vulnerable people, but there is some quite strong evidence to show that the work we are doing is creating value."



A £3m capital redevelopment means the museum can make some important updates to its displays

Happy talk

As part of demonstrating the benefits of the museum's approach, Butler has worked hard to spread his ideas to other museums. He has been part of the Mission Models Money Revolver programme, which is trying to build peer-to-peer networks around ideas of resilience, relevance and responsibility in the cultural sector. Meal was also one of the 12 museums that took part in a programme funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) to investigate the ways the sector engages with the public and encourages participation.

And Butler has developed the Happy Museum project, which is an attempt to help the UK museum sector respond to the challenges presented by the need for creating a more sustainable future. The initiative, which was launched in March, includes a £60,000 fund for museums to show that the principles of happiness and well-being can leave a legacy of cultural change within their organisations and communities.

"The Happy Museum project was inspired by observations that we made through operating our social enterprise," says Butler. "We could see that people who had led isolated lives who joined our programmes or became volunteers were building new friendships through a shared interest in heritage or by just coming to this space. You could see they were progressing and leading happier lives."

Many of these projects seem a bit removed from what people perceive as the core work of museums, but Butler says this is not the case.

"One of the things that came out of our social return on investment research is that without the cultural heritage all the projects have much less meaning and impact. The fact that people can work with collections and historic buildings means the projects have much greater value and they vastly improve their well-being as they can connect to their surroundings."

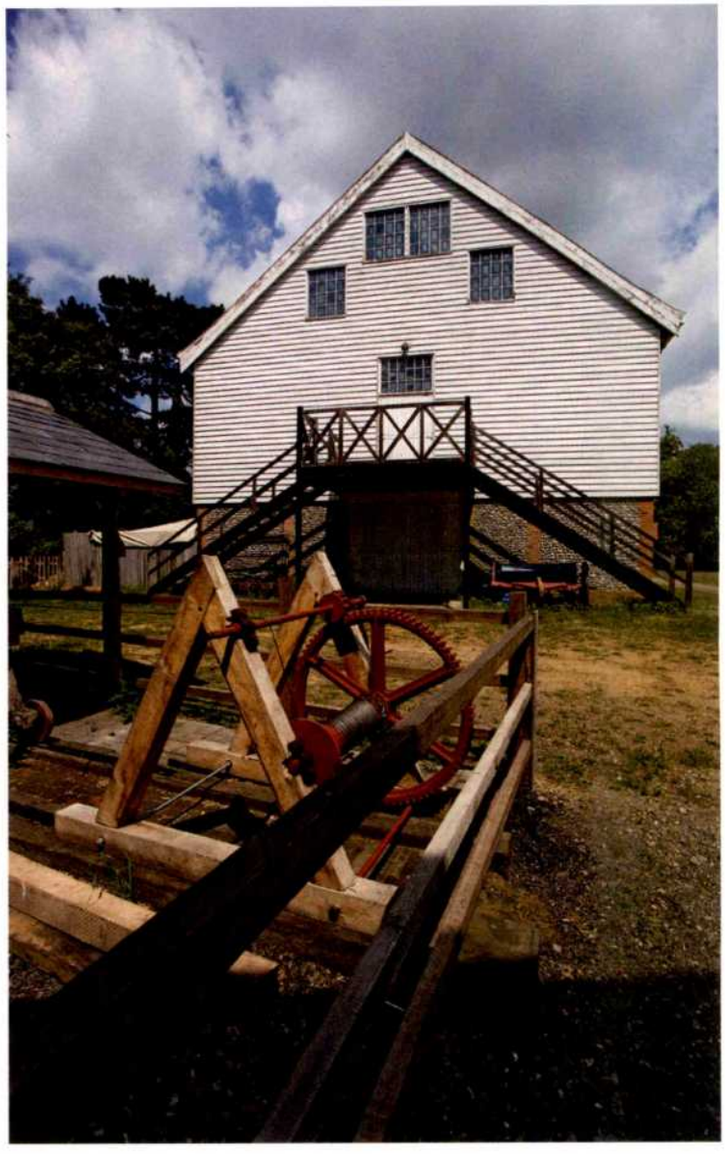
Butler says that he has wanted to spend more on collections and displays, but recent funding arrangements have made this difficult. He has only been able to access about £30,000

Museum of East Anglian Life at a glance

Stowmarket's Museum of East Anglian Life (Meal) opened in 1967 on land that was originally part of the home farm for the Abbot's Hall estate, which dates from medieval times.

Meal has 14 full-time and 8 seasonal staff. There are also more than 140 volunteers.

Annual turnover is just over £550,000: 30% of funding comes from revenue grants from Suffolk County and Mid Suffolk District Councils and 15% from visitor admissions. The rest is from projects and commercial activities, including funding from trusts, contracts from public bodies for services and general fundraising events.



from the Renaissance in the Regions programme, for example.

"I have always found it very strange that we have been able to raise money to do really interesting social programmes but never to do things with the collections," he says.

New ways of working

Butler is hoping that Arts Council England's (ACE) new responsibility for distributing Renaissance funding might change things. He has suggested that ACE could use its existing model of National Portfolio Organisations for the arts to create a scheme of National Portfolio Museums. Rather than fund a select few, he argues, it could support a range of museum organisations of varying sizes.

"If the process for obtaining Renaissance money was opened up, ACE could be a bit more strategic about how it supports museums," he says. "Renaissance was a good thing, but there was never a sense that it rewarded innovation – you got money because you were big."

Meal could get bigger itself as it is working with Suffolk County Council Records Office and Archaeology Service to explore the possibility of forming a new heritage trust for Suffolk. It's early days for this initiative, but one scheme that will definitely increase the museum's capacity is the £3m capital scheme. It is the largest project that the museum has ever undertaken and the new displays will tell the story of Abbot's Hall itself, as well as rural life in East Anglia. Topics covered will include the work of oral historian George Ewart Evans and the history of a local psychiatric institution. Displays on the role of Gypsy travellers in the area will also be featured.

The museum's work with traveller communities has already got it attention in the national press, particularly when it hosted the final of Travellers Got Talent in 2010.

"There was a column in the Daily Mail by Richard Littlejohn suggesting that the people of Stowmarket ought to guard their driveways because the Gypsies were coming to town," says Butler. "So, despite the bigotry, it was quite an honour that something I had been done had been taken notice of by Richard Littlejohn."

The temporary exhibition programme following the completion of the capital project will kick off with an exhibition about English folk customs developed with the Museum of British Folklore and then there will be a show about outsider art created with Pallant House Gallery in Chichester.

Despite Meal's capital project, Butler is wary of expansion for expansion's sake. "Until recently it was about new developments – building new museums, new galleries – and everything was about growth, but that growth is unsustainable and we need to take a more collectivist approach to things."

Ultimately, Butler feels UK museums need to react positively to the environmental, financial and political pressures they are under.

"All these things are coming together. Yes, museums have been quite successful in seeing themselves as part of their community, but the pressures are different now and we need to reimagine the role of museums within society. Perhaps they should become less objective, be prepared to lead campaigns within their community, and see themselves more as anchor organisations within their community and start to value the social capital they create."

Tony Butler will be speaking about the Happy Museum Project at the Museums Association conference in Brighton (3-4 October) www.museumsassociation.org/conference

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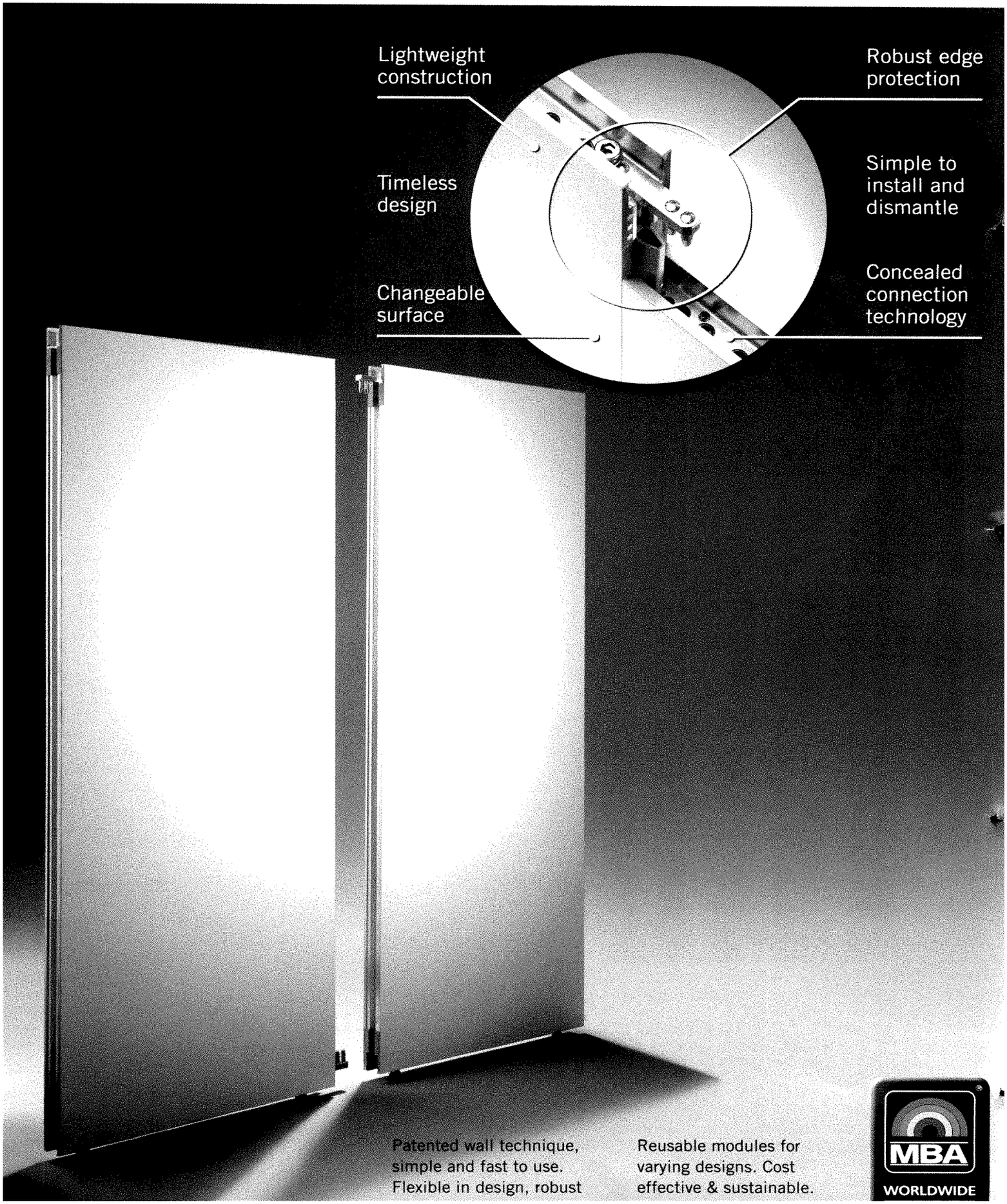

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The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Its location makes the Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum an archaeological hotspot, says *Louise Gray*

Where Salisbury. The Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum has been in its home in the King's House, Cathedral Close, since 1981.

What "The museum is about the history and archaeology of south Wiltshire from prehistory to the present day," says director Adrian Green. "Our major strength is our Designated archaeology collection and within our collecting area we have one of the most impressive prehistoric sites in the world – Stonehenge."

Opened 1860.

Collection The collection ranges from prehistoric archaeology to costume, ceramics and fine art, with pictures by JMW Turner, Augustus John and Rex Whistler. There is an important medieval collection. "The 12-foot Salisbury Giant survives from the 1400s. He and his hobby-horse-like companion Hob Nob used to be paraded around town on Midsummer's Day."

Highlights "My highlight would have to be the Pitt Rivers Wessex collection," Green says. "In 1880 General Pitt Rivers inherited a vast estate on Cranborne Chase. He spent the last 20 years of his life excavating sites on his land. As well as founding a museum at Oxford, he was also one of the founding fathers of archaeology. He founded a second public museum on his estate and part of those collections came to Salisbury Museum in 1975."

Help at hand 15 staff and more than 100 volunteers.

Budget The annual budget is about £300,000. There is an annual grant from Wiltshire Council of £61,244, but most income comes from admission charges (adults £6), donations memberships, legacies and rental income. "This year we secured a grant from Salisbury City Council, so we are in the unusual situation of having our public funding go up in the current financial climate," says Green.

Top: a medieval pilgrim badge showing Our Lady of Tombelane. It was found in an old watercourse in Salisbury.
Above right: the Salisbury Giant and Hob Nob are important links to pre-Reformation England.
Above: the museum occupies a Grade-I listed house opposite Salisbury Cathedral

Sticky moment "Soon after I started in 2007 our Wiltshire Council grant was up for review," Green says. "Without it, the museum would have serious sustainability issues, but we were able to demonstrate what great plans we had for the future and kept the grant."

Survival tip "Don't be afraid to get stuck into the day-to-day jobs as well as work at a strategic level," Green says. "I will do whatever is necessary to get a job done – even if it means painting the shop one day, and the next day talking to a funding body."

Visitors Nearly 20,000 visitors in 2010, but many more attend evening lectures and use the cafe.

Future plans A £2m redevelopment of the King's House, starting with the archaeology galleries.

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Turner Contemporary, Margate, p46

Reviews

'When you approach a huge window with its vista – albeit across the car park – to the Channel, it is easy to understand why Turner was so inspired by the views out to sea from the guesthouse' *Caroline Worthington* on Turner Contemporary, Margate

Royal Palace, Stirling Castle, p54

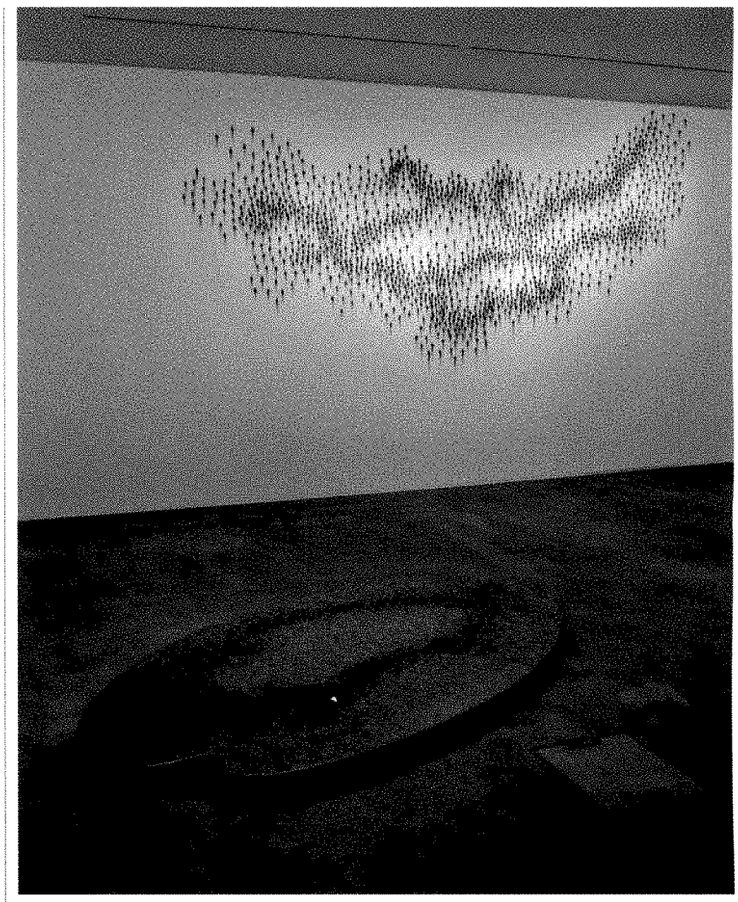
The Cardiff Story, p50

All About Us, At-Bristol, p56

© DAVID GRANDORGE (TURNER)

Turner Contemporary, Margate

Turner was passionate about Margate, but will visitors fall in love with the town's new gallery that bears his name, asks *Caroline Worthington*



COURTESY TERESITA FERNÁNDEZ AND LEHMANN MAUPIN, GALLERY, NEW YORK; COURTESY ELLEN HARVEY AND GALERIE GEBRUDER LEHMANN, LOCKS GALLERY AND MEESSEN DE CLERCQ (HARVEY); COURTESY CONRAD SHAWCROSS ARTIST AND VICTORIA MIRO GALLERY, LONDON (SHAWCROSS); ALL PHOTOGRAPHY © DAVID GRANDORGE

Top: two works from Teresita Fernández – Sfumato (September 18) and Eruption (Small) – feature in the Turner Contemporary's opening show.
Above: inside Arcadia, Ellen Harvey's hymn to Margate.
Right: Limit of Everything and Harmonic Manifold 1, from Conrad Shawcross's Projections of the Perfect Third

JMW Turner's passion for Margate began when, aged 11, he was sent to school in Love Lane. By the 1820s he was a regular visitor, staying at Mrs Booth's guesthouse. His relationship with her was so close that, following the death of her husband, Turner called himself "Mr Booth". With not a super-injunction in sight, they managed to keep their relationship a secret for 17 years.

The new gallery that now bears the artist's name in the town opened in April. Appropriately enough, it sits on the seafront on the site of the Sophia Booth's guesthouse and is certainly no secret – more than 80,000 people visited in the first month.

So, 13 years since the idea was first mooted, what will visitors find? David Chipperfield's building is certainly monumental, dwarfing the clock tower on Cold Harbour. It is clad in opaque white glass designed to reflect the changing light. A cafe spills out onto the entrance terrace where brightly coloured chairs add a much-needed pop of colour.

Inside, the entrance hall is spacious, if somewhat confusing. The shop benefits from an experienced visual merchandiser and there are interesting collaborations with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Whitechapel Gallery, London, in terms of stock. But hanging one of the two Turners currently on show outside the toilets sends visitors in the wrong direction away from the stairs to the first floor and the gallery spaces – and the soundtrack of hand driers doesn't help much, either.

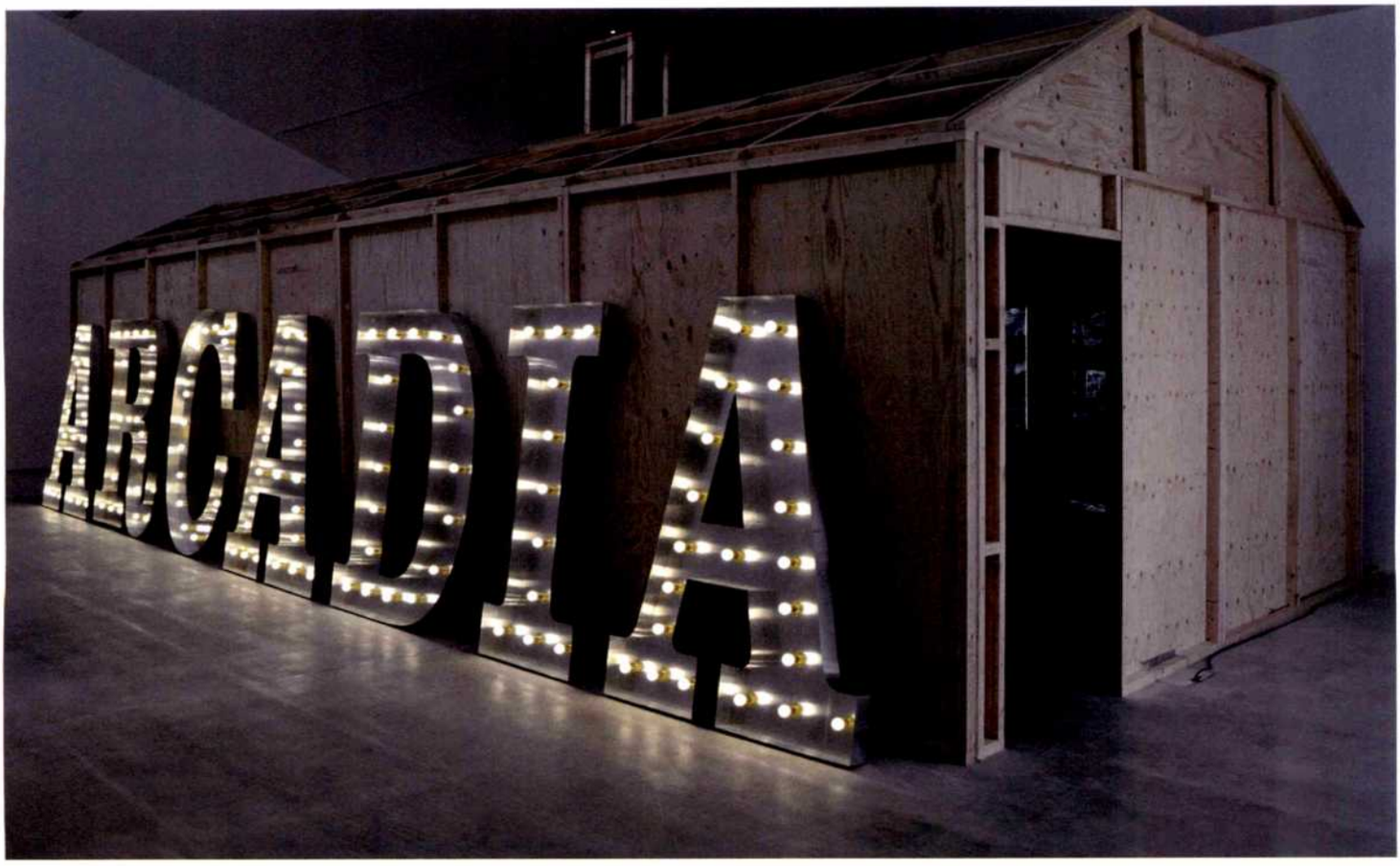
When you approach a huge window with its vista – albeit across the car park – to the Channel, it is easy to understand why Turner was so inspired by the views out to sea from the guesthouse. The horizon is currently framed by Daniel Buren's Borrowing and Multiplying the Landscape.

Spirit of discovery

The image appears on posters announcing the gallery's opening. Those confused by Tate Britain's marketing campaign prominently featuring Turner's Blue Rigi and arriving in Margate expecting a Turner extravaganza will have to wait until early 2012. Turner Contemporary's aim is to establish a reputation for an artistically challenging exhibitions programme showing contemporary art beside historic work. Upstairs, the inaugural exhibition seeks to link Turner's spirit of discovery and curiosity about nature with the work of six international artists.

The hook for Revealed: Turner Contemporary Opens is the artist's own Eruption of the Souffrier Mountains, in the Island of St Vincent, at Midnight, hung against a vivid red wall, as he preferred. Would he have approved of the large black barrier in front of it, however? Responses to the show were undoubtedly mixed when I ▶

Big drawers | Slim drawers | Display drawers | Framed drawers | Showcase tops



visited, but questions and comments were dealt with by lively and well-informed stewards who seemed to relish engaging visitors in conversation.

Local girl Tracey Emin is conspicuous by her absence at Turner Contemporary, thanks to her retrospective at London's Hayward Gallery (until 29 August). Instead, visitors can see Ellen Harvey's installation, Arcadia, which is perhaps the most personal work on display.

Born in Kent, Harvey moved to the US when she was 14 but her family holidayed at the resort regularly. Arcadia, a 360-degree view of Margate lining the inside of a shed, is her "obsessive, compulsive love letter" to the town. The shed is a replica of Turner's London gallery created to showcase his work. Harvey got the exact dimensions of the long-demolished gallery and made everything three quarters of the size. Propped up against the outside is a six-foot Arcadia sign, lit up like an amusement park illumination.

Michael Craig Martin's Turning Pages also uses artificial light. Craig Martin, who turns 70 this year and celebrates with his own London show, has recreated an endlessly opening book in neon that was first commissioned in 1975 by Kent County Council for Margate Library. Victoria Pomery, the director of Turner Contemporary, found it in the archives and asked Craig Martin to remake it for the gallery.

COURTESY ELLEN HARVEY AND LISA DENSMORE LETTMANN, LUCAS GALLERY AND MESSEN DE CLERCQ (HARVEY); © RIJKSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM/COURTESY LORETTA HOPE (CRAIG MARTIN)

Above: outside the shed that houses Ellen Harvey's Arcadia is a sign that references amusement-park graphics.
Left: Turner Contemporary's glass exterior saturates the building with light

Project data

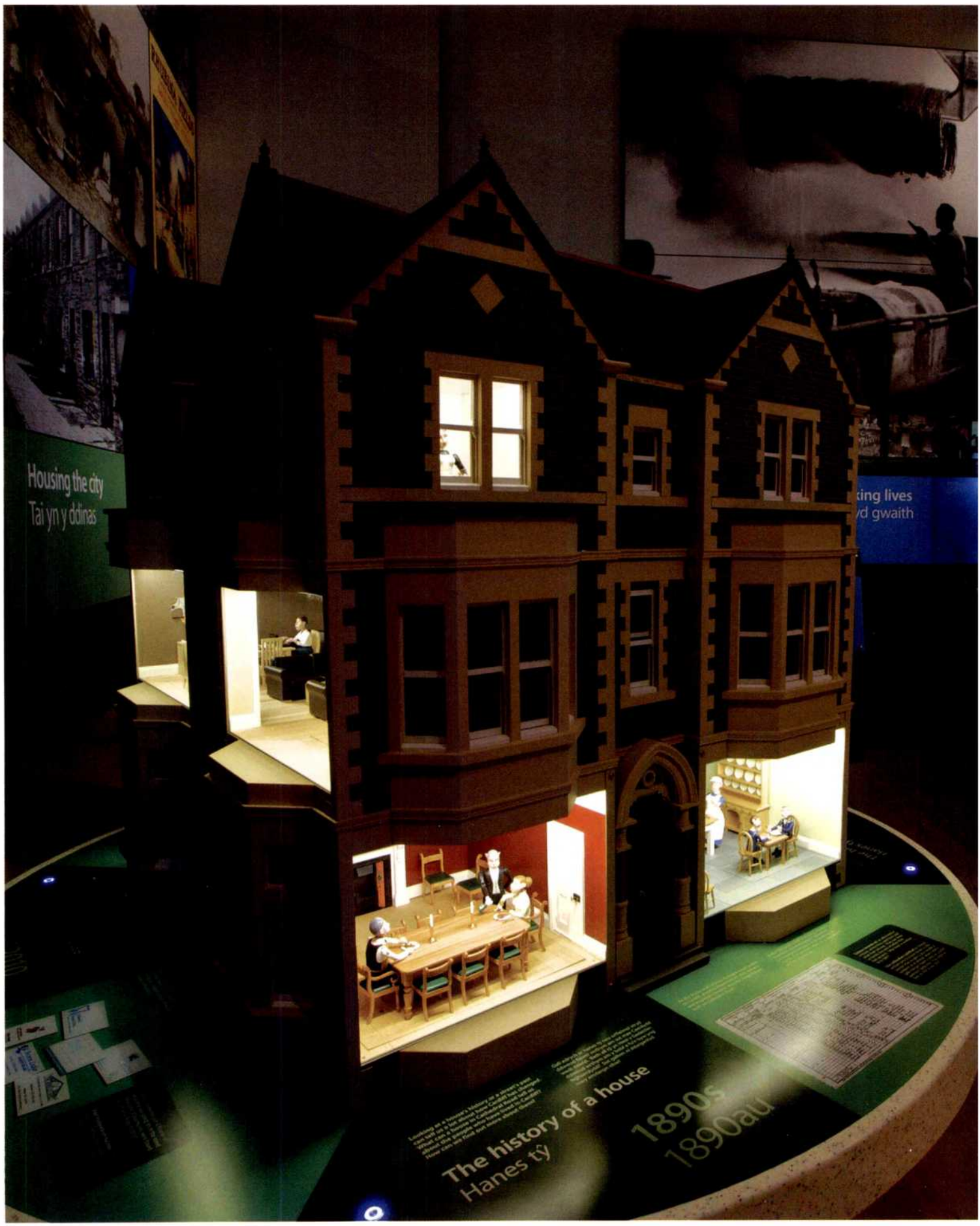
Cost £17.6m
Main funders Kent County Council £6.4m; Arts Council England £4.1m; South East England Development Agency £4m
Architect David Chipperfield Architects
Landscape architect Gross Max
Structural engineer Adams Kara Taylor
Services engineer Arup
Facade, acoustic, fire, lighting and access consultant Arup
Quantity surveyor Gardiner & Theobald
General contractor R Durtnell & Sons
Revealed: Turner Contemporary
Opens runs until 4 September

Culture-led regeneration

The work seems to reflect both the remarkable vision of the council in its original commission and its current drive to regenerate Margate. This approach bears comparison with neighbouring Folkestone, which will host its second triennial this year. The event is the flagship project of the Creative Foundation, a charity based in Folkestone, which is leading a large-scale renewal of the old town area close to the harbour. The foundation has redeveloped over 60 buildings since it began, providing work and living space for creative tenants.

While Turner Contemporary cannot alone reverse the fortunes of Margate, it is an important part of the wider, culture-led regeneration. The gallery has already delivered an award-winning outreach programme and it has made an impact in the nearby Old Town, where an increasing number of creative businesses are opening. With the iconic sea-front amusement park Dreamland being restored, will Margate's dreams come true?

Caroline Worthington is the chief executive of Bexley Heritage Trust


Housing the city
Tai yn y ddinas
The history of a house
Hanes tŷ
1890s
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The Cardiff Story

The involvement of local people in the creation of the displays at a museum dedicated to the city of Cardiff shines through, writes *Tim Bryan*

Top: the first phase of the Cardiff Story.
Above: a plate depicting a flower seller decorated by local artist Charles Byrd.
Left: a model house reveals the changing lives of Cardiff's residents over the decades

Cardiff is home to more than 320,000 inhabitants but until recently was the only major UK city without a museum telling the story of its people and culture. Given the city's history, vibrant multicultural community and the large numbers of tourists it attracts, the opening of the Cardiff Story is not before time, particularly since the Welsh capital has undergone enormous changes in recent years.

The museum is on one of the city's busiest shopping streets in what was the old central library and its Grade II*-listed building has been promoted as a cultural venue, housing a tourist information centre, lifelong learning centre and museum.

The first phase of the Cardiff Story is a large gallery titled Cardiff in Context, which provides an introduction to the capital. It focuses on three key themes: A Port of Some Importance, Changing Cardiff and Working Lives. To give historical perspective, a chronology is provided on a series of large, monolithic graphics that highlight key dates in Cardiff's history, augmented by large projected images.

On the day I visited, most visitors ignored these impressive structures in favour of the sights and sounds of the exhibition beyond. There is also a Time Tunnel video installation that highlights a number of city landmarks such as the castle and the A470 road and shows how they have changed over time.

Local voices

The grand scale of the exhibition space has provided the museum's curatorial and design team with the challenge of making sure that the story of real Cardiffians is not lost among displays that could easily concentrate on the bigger historical issues at the expense of local people. But the good news is that, although the graphics and showcases that divide the gallery are on a scale that reflects their surroundings, those involved have clearly taken great care to develop an overall narrative that is told through the stories of local people. This means that visitors ▶

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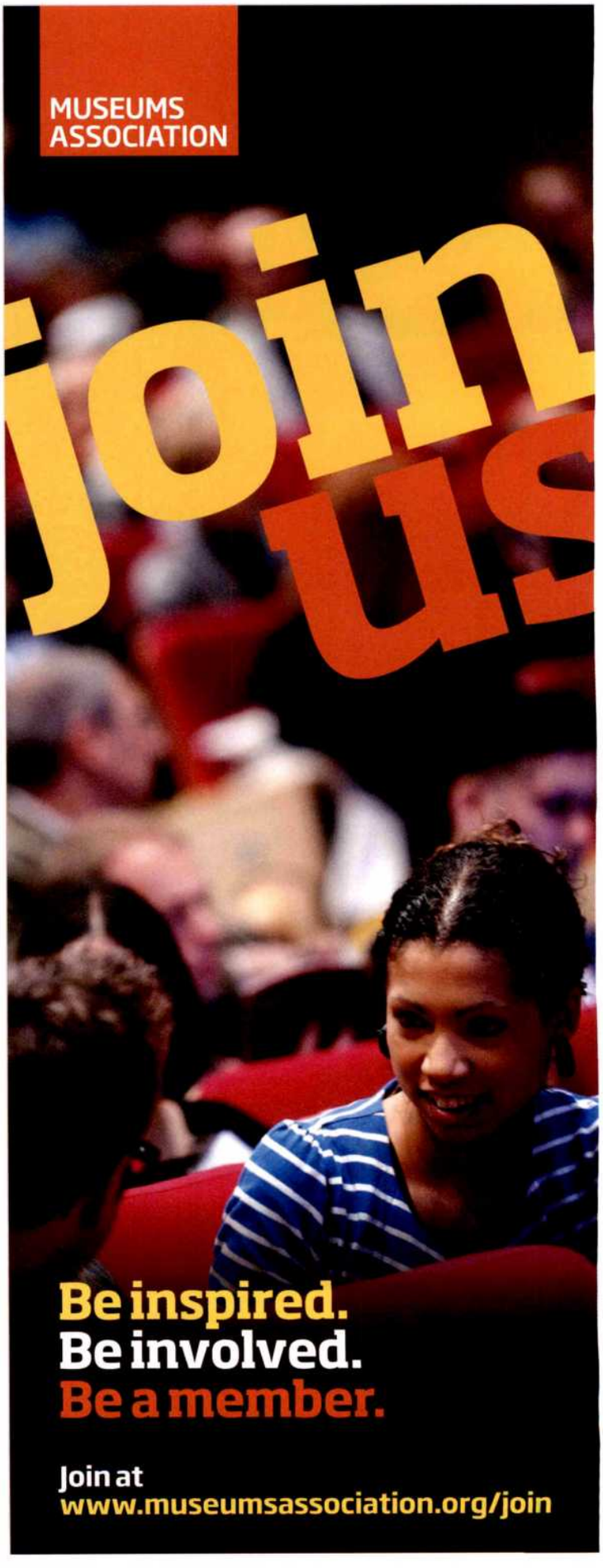

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are not intimidated by their surroundings.

Walking around the gallery there is a real sense that the exhibition has been created with the contributions and support of local people. Although some historic material has been sourced from other museum collections, locally and nationally, more than 3,000 objects have been donated to the museum and many feature in the new displays.

What makes this development even more special is that many donors have also contributed their memories and thoughts about the objects and these can be sampled through audio and video interactives in the gallery, and in object storybooks that sit close to every showcase. These books contain comments about each item on display or other oral history or comments from curators.

Smells and atmospheres

The most striking manifestation of this approach is in the Every Object Tells a Story display that features "real stories from real people". Within a large showcase containing a number of key objects, two video screens play a series of short films about the lives of local people, including workers at the Freeman's Cigar Factory, a fish deliveryman from Tiger Bay, a steelworker and a salmon fisherman from the Severn estuary. As each film plays, a relevant object is spotlighted in the case. The films were clearly popular among the visitors, with most electing to watch all the films rather than just sample one or two.

There is much to see in the displays. The topics they tackle reflect the growth of Cardiff as a port and major commercial centre and its transformation in recent years and include shopping, transport, trade unionism and working conditions and housing.

The large model of a 19th-century house from Cathedral Road is a gem. Made in the style of Victorian seaside automata, the house is mounted on a turntable, which allows it to be gently turned, revealing rooms with animated characters that illustrate how people lived at different periods in Cardiff's history from 1890 to the present.

Down the Docks forms the centrepiece of the exhibition, with an enormous model of Cardiff Docks dominating the room. Important buildings such as the school, seaman's mission and other public buildings are lit on the model using push buttons, and around the outside are drawers containing objects related to people who lived or worked in the docks.

Although there is a good deal of technology used to interpret the story, there are also a number of well thought out low-tech interactives that seem popular with visitors. I particularly liked Smelly Cardiff, an installation interpreting a description of a trip down Bute Road in 1917. Smells available to sample reflect the atmosphere and business of the docks at the time and include garlic, fish, oilskins, tar ropes and Turkish cigarettes.

Downstairs, the City Lab forms the second part of the new development. Although seen as a lifelong learning hub where people can explore the history of their own community in more depth, the interpretation and feel of the space is clearly directed towards attracting children and families, with the emphasis on new technology and national curriculum topics making it a fantastic resource for schools. Once again, the stories of local people feature heavily, with interactives enabling visitors and researchers to delve deep into the story, using external sources such as the Glamorganshire Library and Archive via the internet.

Ultimately, since the current displays are only phase one of the project, the Cardiff Story is a frustrating visit, but only in the sense that one knows there is so much more to tell. If the next phase, which will include more about leisure, sport and the intangible culture of the place is as good as this one, then Cardiffians will finally have a community museum worthy of their capital city.

Tim Bryan is the head of collections at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon

Project data

Cost £2.4m
Main funders Cardiff Council; Heritage Lottery Fund £440,000
Museum manager Kate Howe
Museum officer Victoria Rogers
Exhibitions officer Alison Tallontire
Exhibition design Redman Design
Lighting Simon Baker T&M Services
AV Centre Screen/Electrosonic
Interactives AIVAF/Paragon/Fourteen Balls
Display cases Armour
Illustrations Chris House
Fit-out Scena Pro
Mountmakers National Museums Liverpool
Conservation Cardiff Conservation Services/National Museum of Wales

Right and below: clear galleries, an emphasis on oral history and imaginative features such as Smelly Cardiff, make the Cardiff Story a great educational resource

Royal Palace, Stirling Castle

Built for James V, Stirling Castle's Royal Palace has been rescued from the ravages of time. *Emily Malcolm* enjoys its renaissance

There's an atmosphere of intensity in Stirling Castle, a feeling of focus and hurry. A boy scrubs white flagstones, a woman arranges damask hangings, a trio of female courtiers in bejewelled gowns gasp in admiration as they walk into a room freshly hung with fine tapestries. Preparations for grand events are afoot.

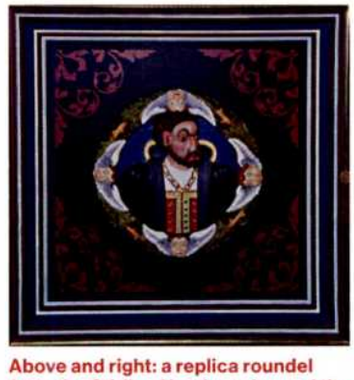
This isn't a vision from the past, or even a piece of dramatic re-enactment. It's a team of Historic Scotland conservators, technicians and interpreters putting the finishing touches to a £12m revamp of the castle's Renaissance palace, which officially reopened early last month. It is one of 345 properties and sites that Historic Scotland, an executive agency of the Scottish government, has responsibility for.

Stirling is the ancient capital of Scotland, but it tends to be overlooked by visitors seeking more obvious cultural and historic attractions in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Historic Scotland, however, has made an extraordinary commitment to Stirling Castle over the past three decades. It has reversed alterations made during two centuries of use as an army barracks and has resurrected the magnificent buildings of the Stuart kings – the Chapel Royal, the Great Hall, and James V's magnificent palace – with modern interpretations of their former glory.

Historic Scotland's head of interpretation, Lorna Ewan, describes the work done at Stirling as a "re-presentation" rather than a restoration, as so little of the internal structures survived. Apart from ornate fireplaces and carved door surrounds in each of the main rooms (which have been left well alone) the project team were given a temptingly blank canvas.

The 2011 interpretation suggests that we are seeing the palace in the 1540s in all its newly completed splendour – the paintwork is bright, the oak furniture pale gold and gilded, the tapestries glittering.



Above and right: a replica roundel from the Stirling Heads series and the queen's presence chamber are part of the castle's redevelopment.
Far right: work on the £12m revamp of Stirling Castle's palace took a decade

Political statement

James V died before the palace was finished so the first room we enter, his presence chamber, is empty. This allows attention to focus on the masterwork of the palace project, the re-creation of the Stirling Heads ceiling – a series of Renaissance sculptures that includes images of classical heroes, monarchs and courtiers. They take the form of hand-carved, large oak medallions, or roundels.

The original ceiling collapsed in the 18th century and the roundels were dispersed among collectors. A five-year project has seen oak replicas carved by craftsman John Donaldson and fitted to a new ceiling. It's an artwork and a political statement that still resonates. Historic Scotland calls the heads "Image Makers for the King" and their message is clear – James V was choosing to place himself and Scotland alongside the great names of European history and culture.

Access difficulties – the palace lies on a sloping site and its three main entrances are narrow or hampered by stairs – mean that it hasn't been possible to use the original circulation routes through the king's and queen's lodgings. Originally the six rooms operated as two sets of three, with courtiers progressing through the increasingly luxurious guard hall, presence chamber and bed chamber according to their rank or intimacy with the royals.

We now enter the king's presence chamber first and then view the queen's rooms in reverse order. It's a missed opportunity, dictated by visitor flow and fire regulations, not to let visitors naturally absorb the growing sense of awe and privilege that the decorative scheme creates. This is, after all, the raison d'être of the layout of the palace as a whole.

Within the rooms there are a variety of ways to learn more

about royal life and the building itself. Originally the palace would have told its own story – classical sculpture, coats of arms and tapestries would all have been full of meaning to the urbane, educated visitors to court. Most of these messages are obscure today, as are the daily routines of the 16th-century nobility.

Costumed interpreters

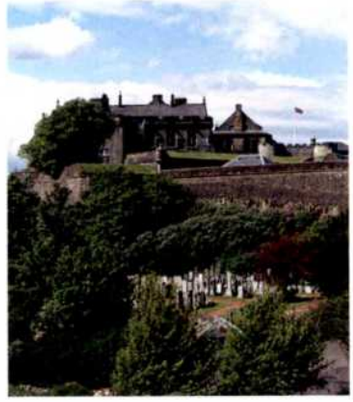
A new, permanent team of costumed interpreters are ready to take up the task of explaining it all. Ambassadors will visit, ladies will dress, jesters will jape and the audience will crane and strain to pick up all the details of a really genuine interaction with the characters. The castle stewards also have a role to play with their regular guided tours.

The written word barely intrudes in the overall scheme – each room has a simple metal stand with a couple of sentences outlining the function of each room and the track number of the new audioguide.

It might be easy to overlook the original features of the Royal Lodgings within the palace, but a different tone is set in the rooms of the Upper West Gallery. Here, the real, surviving, Stirling Heads have been gathered together for the first time since their dispersal.

The entry to the gallery is painted a deep, calming blue and a series of graphic panels introduce James V, his family and his court in simple terms. There's a gentle diminution in light levels along the entry corridor for conservation reasons, but it also acts an antidote to the riot of colour and texture downstairs.

It's a fitting introduction to the more subtle attractions of the



Stirling Heads, stripped of their paint and worn with time. Each is accompanied by a single illustration – a masque costume, a portrait of the king, a motif from a design book which, without trying too hard, place the palace art in a British and European context. There are accompanying touchscreens and interactives to allow more in-depth or family-orientated investigations of the subject, and an audiovisual display describing the sculptural elements of the building's exterior.

The vaults beneath the palace have been converted for family and education use with the usual variety of interactives to press, colour, strum and dress up in. There is also an access gallery, designed in conjunction with local and national disability groups. One of the Stirling Heads is displayed here – the upper gallery being inaccessible to those who can't manage stairs – and there are a range of deliveries of audiovisual, interactive and tactile material. The structure of the palace building has prevented the kind of fully accessible spaces one would aspire to, but the room has been designed with vigour and enthusiasm and doesn't come across as "space apart".

The Stirling Castle project has been an ongoing enterprise of quality and depth. The completion of the palace is the culmination of a decade's work by archaeologists, stonemasons, carpenters, carvers, weavers, all supported by robust research.

We can't know exactly how accurate the result is, nor can we tell how this interpretation will be viewed in the future. We have, however, had a set of magnificent spaces restored to the Scottish and European cultural landscape.

Emily Malcolm is a curator, transport and technology, at Glasgow Museums

Project data

Cost £12m
Main funders Historic Scotland £9m; Scottish government £3m
Exhibition design Studioarc
Audiovisuals Derek Kemp Associates; Centre Screen; Spiral
Original artwork Robert Nelmes
Interactives Studioarc
Display cases Click Netherfield
Lighting design Light Medium; Fotoma
Fit-out contractor ESP Scotland
Graphic production Leach Colour
Publications graphic design Contagious UK
Costumed interpretation team Anna Visscher
Audioguide Antenna International

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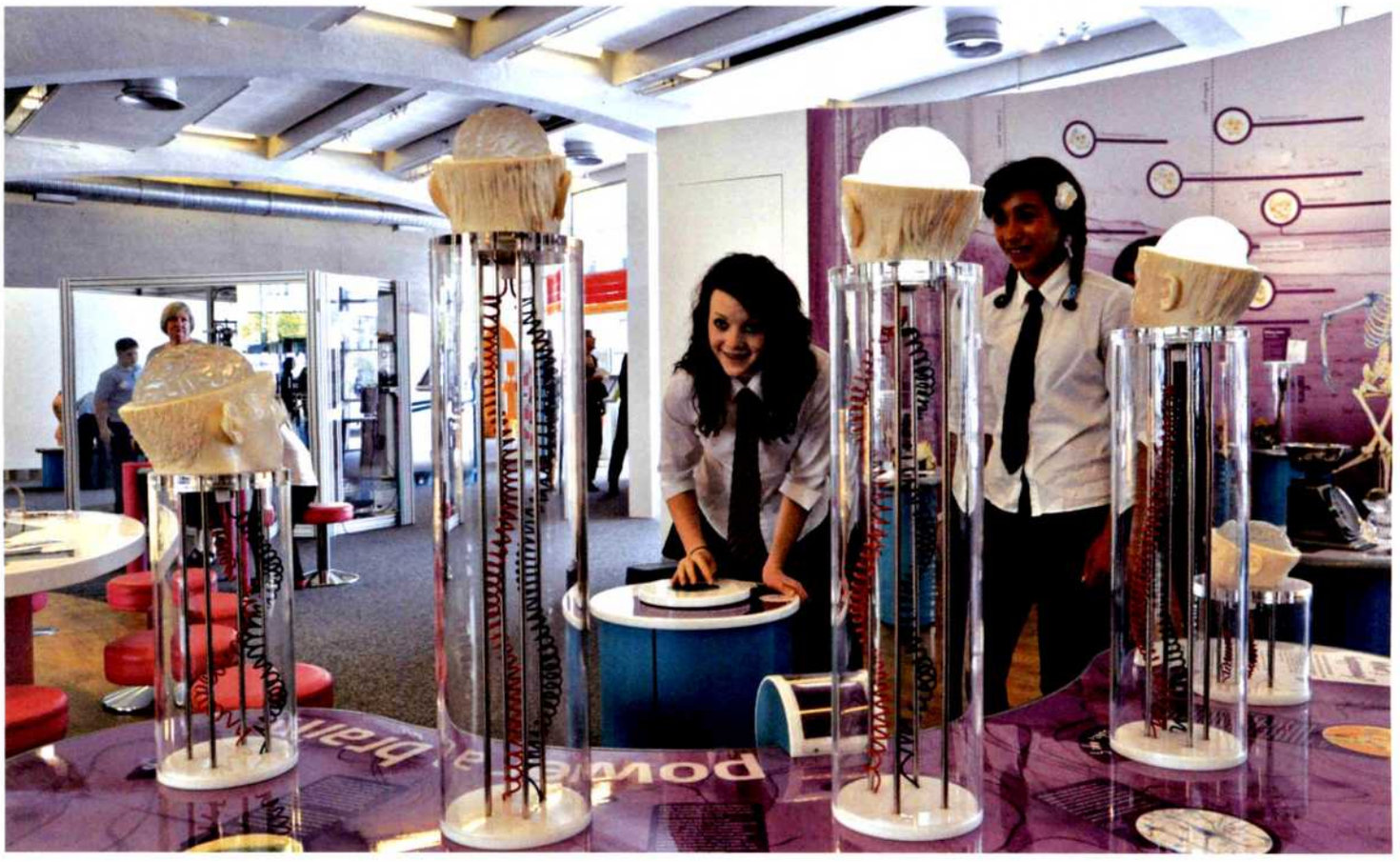


All About Us, At-Bristol

At-Bristol's ambitious and thoughtful investigation into the human body and the brain would benefit from a tighter approach to its content, argues *Maria Blyzinsky*

All About Us is a permanent exhibition about the human body and brain and how they work together. At £1.5m, it's the largest new development undertaken by At-Bristol since the science centre opened in 2000.

The press release promises an experience "to be enjoyed by all the family, allowing visitors to test human phenomena and engage in real science". More than 50 hands-on interactives are used to explore seven core topics: DNA, reproduction, cardiovascular, brains, digestion, locomotion and the senses.

The most impressive thing is that it has been devised, designed and made in-house. At-Bristol is in the enviable position of having its own workshops for developing interactives, and there is no doubt that the team deserves praise and recognition for the effort of pulling together such an ambitious show. However, they could have benefited from an objective outside view to help them step back from the mountain of information that is available on the subject and to tighten up the content.

The introductory panel provides a list of facts and figures relating to the making of the exhibition: 175 metres of metal wire used in the Digestive Run exhibit; 60 prototypes; 1,273 m^2 of new carpet; 52 scientific advisers, 508 suppliers. All fascinating, but off-message for the target audience. An introduction that includes interesting facts and figures about our bodies as a taster for the exhibition to come would have been more appropriate.

The interactive-heavy approach has strengths and weaknesses.

There is no doubt that hands-on exhibits capture the attention of children. My visit coincided with the simultaneous arrival of about five school groups, which provided an excellent opportunity for a "time and motion" study. Left to their own devices, it soon became apparent that kids tend to just tug at the interactives to make something happen without trying to find out why it happens. The How Long is DNA exhibit took a battering as an improvised tug-of-war machine.

Air pump adaptation

However, the topics are strong enough so that, as soon as a member of the Live Science Team (as the gallery explainers are called) arrives on the scene, kids and adults are absorbed in the subject and ask pertinent questions. Even so, I felt there was a missing link in some of the interpretation, which meant that kids can engage without learning.

Viewed as individual elements, the interactives are interesting and thoughtfully developed. I was particularly taken by the Vocal Vowels display, which explores how we change the shape of our mouth and throat to make subtle but different sounds that make up speech. There are three main components to the display: text and graphics; an animated film showing how the mouth and throat change shape; and a mechanical interactive where air can be pumped through different-shaped chambers to produce vowel sounds. The concept is relatively simple and the key messages are well-considered, but it might have been better if a reward for the right interaction could have been incorporated into the display. A group of schoolboys ignored the key message and adapted the air pump to make farting noises.

The Real Brain display is sensitively devised to make sure visitors realise what they are looking at and understand how important it is to have volunteers who leave their bodies to science. It felt like a privilege to be able to inspect the brain at such close quarters. I particularly liked the corresponding interactive where visitors can handle brain-models to consider how they grow and weigh in relation to our bodies.

The exhibition is located in a bright and airy ground-floor space, and the exhibits are free-standing and self-contained, so visitors can dip in and out without needing to follow a linear route. Even so, I would have liked a way of making the zones more easily identifiable because it can be difficult to navigate the space without missing things. Admittedly, I was jostling for position along with a couple of hundred teenagers, but I had to do three laps of the room before I felt satisfied that I had seen everything.

Human phenomena: with over 50 interactives in All About Us, At-Bristol scores highly on the fun quotient for its new exhibition

Information overload

I would also have liked the interpretation arranged into a clearer hierarchy. Visually, the displays tend to be quite busy with several interpretive elements vying for attention. It would be easier to understand if the content was broken down into progressively more detailed chunks of information, with an easy-to-follow entry point.

The DNA section is particularly overloaded with information. This might be the result of a fruitful and close relationship with a group of well-meaning scientific advisers who have provided amazing content, but don't have the necessary skills to adapt the material for the target audience. Some judicious editing would have been advisable.

On the whole, the exhibition is creative and experimental. Museum professionals should definitely visit if they are looking for ideas on how to develop and maintain robust mechanical interactives, or if they would like advice on how to attract and manage large numbers of school groups. (The answer lies with having an army of irrepressible gallery explainers complete with megaphones at the ready.)

On the other hand, they should steer clear if they don't enjoy displays that are primarily aimed at children (or at least avoid mornings during term time), or if they prefer material culture to scientific principles, because there are very few "real" objects on display.

Otherwise, be prepared to dive in, elbow the kids out of the way and have a go.

Maria Blyzinsky is a freelance exhibitions consultant and founder member of the Exhibitions Team

Project data

Cost £1.5m
Main funder Wellcome Trust
Exhibitions director Dan Bird
Exhibition design, development, research and construction in-house
3D concept design Razorbite
Illustrator Juliet Percival
Graphic design Qube Design Associates

Books

Morbid Curiosities: Medical Museums in Nineteenth-Century Britain

A forensic examination of the history of medical collections would have benefited from a bit more drama, says *Timothy Mason*

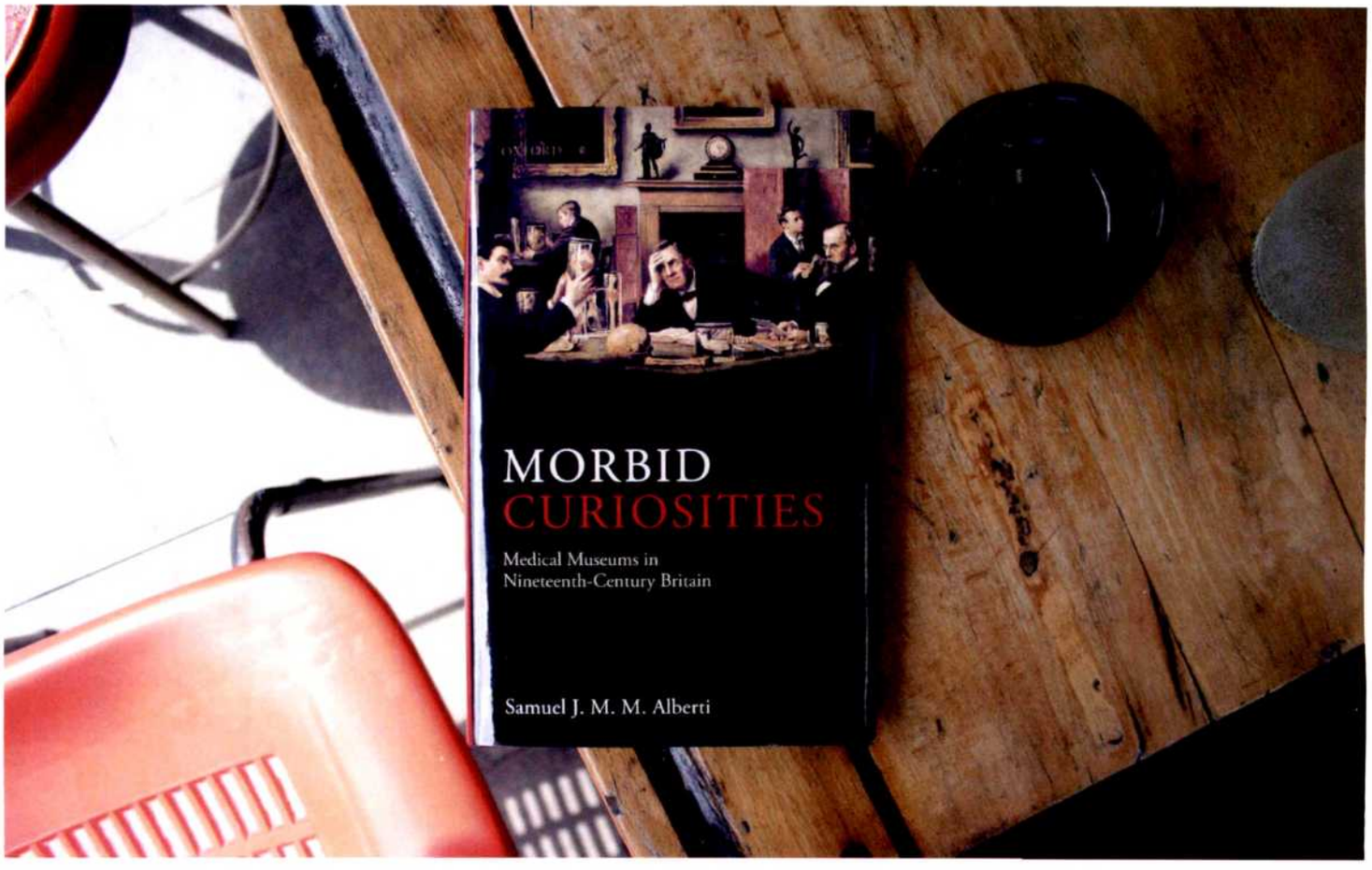
Samuel Alberti's book on the history of Manchester Museum took an anatomical view of his subject mater (*Museums Journal October 2010, p58*). In his latest book, the subject matter is anatomy itself – the morbid pathology which formed the basis of the collections in more than 100 medical museums operating in the British Isles during the 19th century.

It's not a topic that sets the heart racing but it has had its dramatic moments and characters, including the resurrection men, grave-robbers who met the increasing demand for fresh body parts by removing bodies from graves soon after burial; the infamous Burke and Hare, who cut out the middleman and murdered in order to sell the dismembered corpses of their victims; and the crowds who attacked anatomy schools in Cambridge, Sheffield and elsewhere in the 1830s.

But Alberti, the director of museums and archives at the Royal College of Surgeons, London, is a conscientious and serious author and he deals with these matters with scarcely a glance. It seems he is anxious to protect his readers from the more melodramatic elements of this otherwise sober story.

It's a pity because, although this is at times a dry tale, it is not without considerable interest. Here, as in Alberti's Manchester book, he leaves few stones unturned as he methodically examines where museums of medicine were situated and how their collections were formed, conserved and preserved, displayed and viewed. What he reveals is a rather murky world in which diseased body parts were gathered, exchanged and displayed; where conservators guarded their secret methods for preservation, where the director of the museum at Guy's Hospital was known as the "inspector of the dead" and where there were stories of foul smells, misappropriated alcohol and unpleasant health and safety issues for museum staff.

The collections, which were designed as teaching and learning aids, grew exponentially. Alberti notes that by 1905 the museum at Guy's had grown from 500 specimens to 12,000 and this "was



still just one of a hundred medical museums." This was, however, the zenith of these collections, at least as far as their size is concerned. As teaching methods changed and the number of post-mortems declined, the years that followed saw the closure and even the destruction of some collections. More recently the 1999 Alder Hey scandal and the requirements of the Human Tissue Acts were further setbacks to the use of "preserved anatomical specimens". But, as Alberti notes, public anxiety about the use of body parts for teaching and research was counter-balanced by the success of Gunther von Hagen's Body Worlds exhibitions, which have attracted about 25 million visitors around the world.

Private museums often held body parts in their collections. Reliquaries often contained small fragments of what were reputed to be the body parts of saints; no cabinet of curiosities would have seemed complete without some form of human tissue. The debate about human remains continues to reverberate through museums and the arguments seem more about ownership and repatriation than collecting body parts for academic purposes. Nevertheless, these museums (if that was ever the right word) found themselves in danger of being left stranded by an ebbing tide of interest and needing to reinvent themselves, ironically, as museums. Both the Royal colleges, in Edinburgh and London, have appointed directors with a museum background. Both have undergone major revamps and the result, in London at least, is a homage to the preserver's art, described in a Museums Journal review as "visually stunning, exquisitely lit and object-rich".

Sadly, I can't say the same for Morbid Curiosities, which surely deserves better than 30 grainy black and white illustrations in the text. The Hunterian Museum is selling signed copies at £44. There's a message of some kind here – I am just not quite sure what it is.

By Samuel Alberti, Oxford University Press, £55
ISBN 978-0-19-958458-

Timothy Mason is a museum consultant

On my bookshelf

Sarah Riddle

England, England, by Julian Barnes

England, England is the name given to Rupert Murdoch-like character Sir Jack Pitman's last great idea. This sees Sir Jack's company, Pitco, recreating England's top historic and cultural attractions on the Isle of Wight, advertised as: "Everything you imagined England to be, but more convenient, cleaner, friendlier and more efficient."

Wembley Stadium, Buckingham Palace, a half-sized Big Ben, the National Gallery, Stonehenge, Shakespeare and Princess Diana's graves, in addition to renactments of the Battle of Britain and the sailing of the Mayflower (every Thursday morning at 10:30am) can be enjoyed all within close proximity of each other on the Isle of Wight.

The people of England play a starring role in all this, identifying too closely with their assumed characters: the smugglers begin smuggling and Robin Hood and his band really do become outlaws.

All this is supported by market research to assess what is quintessentially English and what people really know about English history. While I am not convinced that the original can ever be truly be replaced by the replica, there is some appeal in experiencing a bucolic happy representation of the past.

England, England is a fun and cynical take on representing a nation's history to make visitors feel good. It questions what is real, what is the truth and what people want.

Sarah Riddle is a curator at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall in Falmouth

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Profile Andy Sawyer: sci-fi librarian

Andy Sawyer is librarian of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection at the University of Liverpool and course director of its MA in science fiction studies. He is guest curator of the Out of this World: Science Fiction But Not As You Know It exhibition, which runs at the British Library, London, until 25 September.

What's in your library?
We have almost entire runs of magazines such as Amazing Stories, which was started in 1926 by the inventor and publisher Hugo Gernsback. He was already dabbling in radio back then, which is like someone being into robotics now. Gernsback saw the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne and HG Wells as prophetic – his tag-line was "extravagant fiction today, cold fact tomorrow". Not many science-fiction writers now would say their job is to create the future. It's more about reflecting our dreams and fears about what's to come and it's a lot more dystopian.

When did you first become interested in sci-fi?
I remember hearing Journey into Space on the radio in the 1950s. It was all about the first landing on the moon, which was depicted as a British Commonwealth effort that took place in 1965. From there, it was superhero comic books and on to Isaac Asimov and Arthur C Clarke. I remember the first episode of Doctor Who – it's still an iconic programme, but I'd never recommend anyone to revise for their physics A-level by watching it.

Are all sci-fi enthusiasts socially awkward men?
A lot of women enjoy science fiction, but this has been hidden by the stereotype that has rather been propagated by men who like sci-fi and women who don't. I was looking at membership figures for SF conventions and around a third were women. There have been female writers such as Ursula Le Guin, Octavia Butler, Margaret Atwood and, believe it or not, the Brontë sisters, whose childhood stories about imaginary worlds are featured in our exhibition.

Andy Sawyer says that sci-fi appreciation is not limited to men

What are they like?
They are tiny manuscript books with fantastic stories, poems and pastiche newspapers with very detailed hand-drawn maps and charts. The story goes that they were each given a toy soldier and they then proceeded to invent fantasy lands for them. The books come as a bit of a surprise to non-Brontë scholars and it's interesting to think this fantasy element is what a lot of writers have subsequently used in books such as Lord of the Rings and Dune.

Isn't it all a bit "beam me up, Heathcliff"?
I think it carried on into their adult writing. There are fantasy elements in Wuthering Heights and that bit at the end of Jane Eyre when she hears Rochester calling to her is what must basically be telepathy.

Moves and honours

In the Queen's birthday honours a CBE goes to **Simon Thurley**, chief executive, English Heritage. OBEs go to **Lewis Biggs**, chief executive and artistic director, Liverpool Biennial; **Barbara Crawford**, president, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; **Bill Ferris**, chief executive of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust; **Roger Thackray**, head of archaeology, National Trust; and **Richard Lane**, a former director of science at the Natural History Museum, London. MBEs go to **John Kirkup**, curator, Hunterian Museum, Glasgow; **Terry Suthers** for services to heritage and museums in Yorkshire and Humberside; and **Michael Wallace** for voluntary service to York's National Railway Museum.

Caro Howell is the new director of the Foundling Museum, London. She had been head of education and public events at London's Whitechapel Gallery.

Ian Owens, the head of the department of life sciences at Imperial College, is the new director of science at the Natural History Museum, London.

At Glasgow Museums, **Ellen McAdam** has moved from being collections services manager to become head of museums and collections.

Max Dunbar, who was the project manager for the Everton Collection, is the new chief executive officer at the Manchester Jewish Museum.

Neil Handley is the new chairman of the London Museums of Health and Medicine. He succeeds Caroline Worthington, who has left the medical museums sector.

Caro Howell

Ian Owens

Joanna Jones has left Sefton Museums and Galleries to become the director of museums and Galleries for Canterbury City Council.

New blood at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford upon Avon: freelance consultant **Paul Fraser Webb** joins as collections manager; **Susie Scott**, who has worked for Hampshire Museums and Archives Service, becomes access and interpretation manager. The new museum collections assistant is **Janine Fox**, who was at Staffordshire Heritage and Arts. **Anna Griffiths**, previously learning and interpretation officer at the Creswell Heritage Trust, is the new access and interpretation coordinator.

Who got the job?

Curator (maternity cover), Ely Museum
Salary: £22,221-£23,708
Advertised: MJ, December 2010

Kate Ayres

What attracted you to the job? The fact that it is an independent social history museum and, as curator, you have to wear many different hats; I'm also curatorial adviser to two other local museums.

What does it entail? I submitted a lottery grant in my first week and I've just heard that it was successful. We've now got money to update the Ely Ware pottery collection. I'm very excited about ordering the new display case.

Other jobs Manager/curator, True's Yard, King's Lynn; and manager/curator, Swaffham Museum, Norfolk.

Qualifications BA archaeology, MA museum and artefact studies.

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See ***www.royalnavalmuseum.org/about_vacancies.htm*** for details and an application form. Informal enquiries can be made to Matthew Sheldon, Head of Curatorial Department: 02392 727577, ***matthew.sheldon@nmrn.org.uk***

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www.keats-shelley.com

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Closing date for applications Friday 29 July 2011

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Closing date: midday, Tuesday 12 July 2011.

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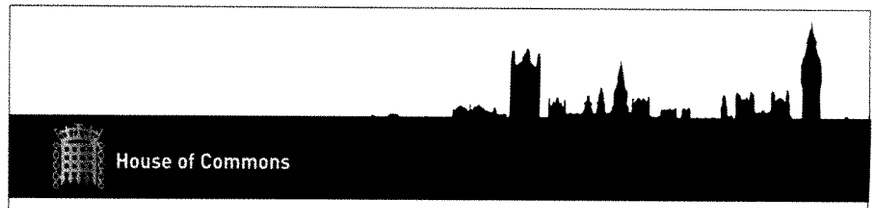

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From July 2010 the **MA's e-newsletter** moved from monthly to weekly, greatly increasing its profile. With over 27,000 subscribers it enjoys very strong viewing rates and click-throughs. The top jobs of the week are displayed prominently on the e-newsletter. You can subscribe today at **www.museumsassociation.org**

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

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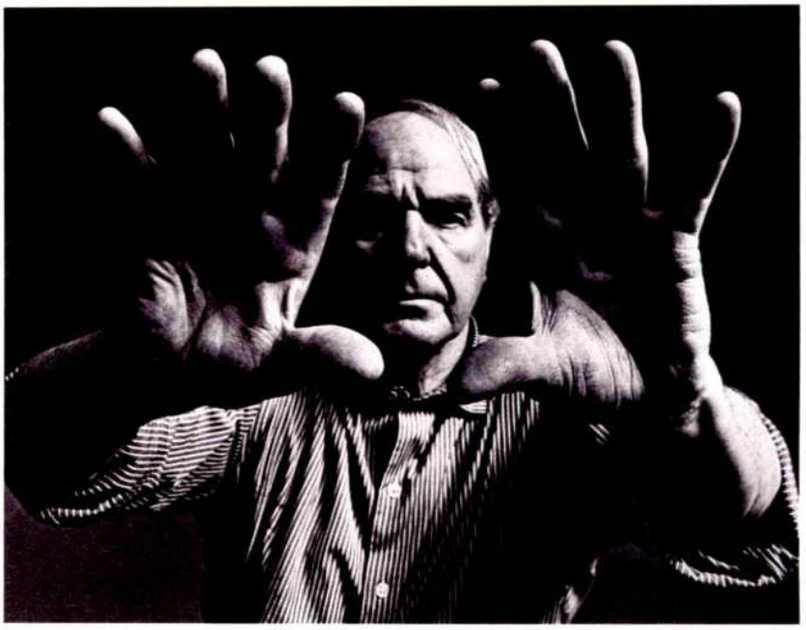
On offer: the Tank Museum, Dorset, has a number of vehicles for disposal



John Hedgecoe's portrait of Henry Moore is among the archive acquired by the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich

The National Portrait Gallery, London, has acquired a rarely-seen portrait of three 18th-century society ladies as Macbeth's witches

© 2011 JOHN HEDGECOE/TOPFOTO (MOORE); NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON (WITCHES)

Find an object

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loans throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service offers a variety of costume and textile items including Indian and Chinese costume and textiles, Hungarian and Breton national dress and a large number of **haberdashery** items and lace trim, all dating from the 19th century. Details on request.
Contact: Jamie Everitt
tel: 07778 506885.
email: jamie.everitt@norfolk.gov.uk

● The Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, is looking to dispose of an **Aden police uniform**, dating from when Aden was ruled as part of British India. Details on request.
Contact: Willow Silvani
email: ws267@cam.ac.uk

● Following the merger of former Inland Revenue and HM Customs & Excise to create HM Revenue & Customs, the department has a number of artefacts and items of antique furniture that can be disposed of. Items range from excise gauging equipment, **cast-iron coats of arms** to George III, Regency and Victorian furniture including clocks. Items that have not been found new homes in other government departments or public sector organisations are being offered to museums, to which the public have access. All items are free of charge; recipients to arrange collection.
Contact: Martin Cannon
tel: 020 7438 7743
email: martin.cannon@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

● The **Tank Museum**, Dorset, has a number of vehicles for disposal. Details on request.
Contact: Valerie Bedford
email: tracer@tankmuseum.org

● A model **Plasticine city**, over four metres in length, needs a new home.
Contact: Nigel Langon
tel: 01377 271 490
email: nigellangdon@gmail.com

● Rutland County Museum wishes to dispose of 27 items from its agricultural and social history collections. They include a threshing machine, **winnowing machine**, harrow, yokes and large grass roller.
Contact: Lorraine Cornwell
tel: 01572 758439
email: lcornwell@rutland.gov.uk

● The Rutland Railway Museum, Leicestershire, wishes to dispose of a 6.0 standard gauge steam **saddle tank locomotive** built by the Hunslet Engine Company in 1941. In a dismantled and unrestored condition, the locomotive formerly worked at Corby Steelworks in Northamptonshire.
Contact: Simon Layfield
tel: 07798 641105

Acquisitions

● The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, has acquired a major collection of more than 450 portraits by **John Hedgecoe**, one of

the most significant figures in British photography. An exhibition of works from this collection, The Face of the Artist, runs until 4 December. It will feature portraits of artists such as Dame Barbara Hepworth, David Hockney and Stanley Spencer together with photographs of writers and designers.

● The Art Fund has helped Buxton Museum and Art Gallery acquire an important 18th-century painting capturing a local scene. The fund contributed £6,666 towards the acquisition of **View of Matlock**, Derbyshire, by William Marlow when it was bought at auction for £20,000 at Sotheby's. Other significant funding contributions were made by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£6,666) through its Collecting Cultures initiative, and £5,333 from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

● **Bletchley Park Museum**, Milton Keynes, has acquired two items linked to its wartime codebreakers: a silver tankard that was presented to Max Newman by his 300-strong team – the Newmanry – at the end of the war; and a hand-drawn Monopoly board on which Alan Turing played. Both artefacts are on display in the museum.

● A grant from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund has enabled Leeds Museums and Galleries to buy at auction a dress commissioned by Mary Holden Illingworth, of the Yorkshire mill-owning family, from Charles Worth for her daughter's wedding in 1881. The fund has also helped the Wordsworth Museum, Grasmere, to buy at auction an autograph description of William Wordsworth by **Thomas De Quincey** written in 1838.

John Ruskin's velvet crab is part of the online drawing resource offered by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

The Hunterian, Glasgow, has acquired a rare expressionist-candlestick

● The Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, has added a rare copper and enamel **candlestick** by Margaret and Frances Macdonald, which was bought for £100,000. The Art Fund gave £65,000, the National Fund for Acquisitions £20,000 and the William and Margaret Johnstone Endowment Fund £15,000. A portrait by expressionist painter **Marie-Louise von Motesiczky** was also bought for £28,000, with the Art Fund and McCallum Endowment Fund both giving £10,000 towards the purchase and the National Fund for Acquisitions £8,000.

● The National Portrait Gallery (NPG), London, has acquired a large and rarely seen picture of three of 18th-century society's most glamorous women as the **three witches** from Shakespeare's Macbeth. It was acquired through the government's Acceptance in Lieu scheme having been allocated to the NPG from a private collection in lieu of inheritance tax.

● Penlee House Gallery & Museum in Penzance, Cornwall, has acquired a 19th-century oil painting by **Marianne Stokes**, an Austrian-born artist who was a renowned member of the Cornish art world. Lantern Light is the first work by the artist to be acquired by the museum. The Art Fund contributed £17,250 towards the total cost of £37,250.

● The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund has helped the **River and Rowing Museum**, Henley-on-Thames, buy a 19th-century folio of views of the River Thames from the drawings of William Havell; and the Herbert, Coventry, purchase an album of views of Coventry by William Henry Brooke.

● The Wellcome Library, London, has acquired a portrait drawing of the French surgeon **Ange-Bernard Imbert-Delonnes** by Pierre Chasselat. It was bought with the aid of grants from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Art Fund.

Export bars

● The culture minister has placed a temporary export bar on Ordination, a painting by **Nicolas Poussin**. The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred until 9 August. This period may be extended until 9 February 2012 if a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase the painting at the price of £15m is expressed.

A temporary export bar has also been placed on an

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 0207426 6940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Mentor refresher
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to get an update on any developments in the scheme. Catch up with the professional development department, refresh your mentoring skills and share information with other mentors.

Introduction to mentoring
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for anyone who is committed to continuing professional development and wants to become a mentor for the AMA. We will guide you through all stages in the mentoring process.

To book CPD events, email the name, date and location of the event you wish to attend, along with your contact details, to cpd@museumsassociation.org or call 020 7426 6955

Members' meetings
21 July 2011, Cardiff
September 2011, Leeds
The MA's new national and regional members meetings will be held in Cardiff in July and September in Leeds. See the MA website and email newsletters for more details.

These events are free to all members living and working in each area. They include discussion of regional and national policy issues and feature information on the MA's current activities, with plenty of opportunities for debate and feedback. Future members meetings are

16th-century painting by Luis de Morales, The Virgin and Child. The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred until 12 July. This period may be extended until 12 October if a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £1,645,868 is expressed.
Contact: The Secretary, the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Grosvenor House, 14 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RS. Tel: 0121 345 7427

Funding

● The Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Gosport, has received a £3.4m confirmed award from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to help save HMS Alliance, the only **surviving second world war submarine** that is the memorial to 5,300 British submariners. HMS Alliance is listed in the UK's historic ship's register, and is the only remaining second world war submarine in the UK that is open to the public. The museum is fundraising for a further £1.5m for its new Alliance gallery.

Awards

● OMI Architects of Manchester has received a Riba Award for Design Excellence for the museum at **Creswell Crags** near Worksop. Creswell Crags is is currently shortlisted for World Heritage Site status.

A Riba award has gone to the architects of the museum at Creswell Crags, near Worksop

● The Fondazione Prada, Italy, and the Qatar Museums Authority are to launch a new International **Curators Award**. Full information will be available from 1 November. *www.fondazioneprada.org* and *www.qma.com.qa*

A temporary export bar has been placed on Luis de Morales' painting of the Virgin and Child

● **East Grinstead Museum** has received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

● The European Museum Academy invites European science and technology museums to apply for the **2012 Micheletti Award**. The deadline is 31 July. *www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu*

● Leeds City Museum has been awarded the first National Youth Agency's **Hear by Right** bronze award. The award was developed by the National Youth Agency in 2010 to showcase the achievements of organisations that take youth participation seriously and highlight the contribution of the young people they work with. *www.nya.org.uk*

● The **Weald & Downland** Open Air Museum, Chichester, and the **Hampshire & Wight Trust** for Maritime Archaeology have won an European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/ Europa Nostra award in the education, training and awareness-raising category. The Hackfall Trust and the Woodland Trust won a prize in the conservation category for the **Hackfall Woodland Garden**, Grewelthorpe, North Yorkshire.

Web news

● A new iPhone app created for **Art in Yorkshire** lets users download information around the region's exhibitions. *http://art.yorkshire.com/get-the-app*

● The British Postal Museum & Archive, London, has launched its a new website, redesigned by Mind Unit. The **900-page site** offers new content, improved photographic access and 95,000 searchable records in the online catalogue. *www.postalheritage.org.uk*

● The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, has launched the **Elements of Drawing: John Ruskin's Teaching Collection** at Oxford, an online teaching resource. *http://ruskin.ashmolean.org*

● A free new toolkit is available to help museums encourage sustainable living throughout their communities. **The Museums for the Future Toolkit** outlines ways that museums can work with visitors, schools and communities towards a sustainable future. *www.abcofworkingwithschools.org.uk/widening-access*

● **Things To Do**, a new site launched by the BBC with Culture24, allows UK cultural institutions to share their learning activities related to BBC programmes. *www.bbc.co.uk/thingstodo*

planned for London and the East Midlands later in the year. For more information, visit *www.museumsassociation.org/events*

AMA
7 September 2011, London
A workshop for anyone undertaking or thinking about undertaking the Associate of the Museums Association (AMA). The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. The afternoon session will explore the updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants are welcome to come for the entire day or just the afternoon.

Museums Association Annual Conference & Exhibition
3-4 October 2011, Brighton Centre, Brighton
In these tough times it is more important than ever to think creatively, engage with colleagues, and develop new skills. Europe's largest conference for museum professionals is packed with thought-provoking sessions and essential networking opportunities. It is designed to ensure you return to work informed, inspired and equipped to take on the challenges that lie ahead.

Arts Council officer Althea Efunshile will be a keynote speaker at the MA's conference

The conference themes are Museums of the future; Innovation; and Creating and sustaining networks. Keynote speakers include Tim Smit, the chief executive of the Eden Project in Cornwall; Althea Efunshile, the chief operating officer of Arts Council England; and Caroline Lucas, who is the member of parliament for Brighton Pavilion and leader of the Green Party of England and Wales.

Early booking: book before 31 July to pay up to £120 less.
For more information visit www.museumsassociation.org/conference

Black Sabbath concert poster, 1970, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Tom Grosvenor

"This is a very ephemeral object from the very early days of heavy metal; a poster that was hand-made and designed to be pasted up and torn down once the evening was over.

The fact that it has survived for 40 years demonstrates just how important the movement was to a lot of people. These aren't things that are usually displayed in museums, but there's no doubt they are pieces of our cultural heritage.

One of the things that define people is their taste in music and this is particularly true for heavy metal. It wasn't something that you left behind when you hit your 30s; it's a lifelong commitment and once you're in – and the patches are sewn on to your denim jacket – you're in.

Tom Grosvenor is the exhibitions officer at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Heavy metal was invented in Birmingham and Black Sabbath, who came from Aston, was its first successful band. After losing the tips of two fingers in an industrial accident, guitarist Tony Iommi had to alter his playing style and a heavier sound was born.

From there, the Home of Metal exhibition explores the contributions of two more local heavyweights: Judas Priest vocalist Rob Halford remembers being at school and watching the walls shake to the sound of metal hammers in the foundries. And Napalm Death created a whole new sub-genre of metal which was all about speed and the shouting of very personal, political lyrics.

These bands are known throughout the world and they all came from this region, but Birmingham and the West Midlands haven't always been keen on the link. There was a fear factor of what it all means: the imagery, mythology and the links to the occult, which were all pretty tongue-in-cheek. But now it's time to celebrate its global impact.

All the Home of Metal events grew out of an appeal that was made four years ago for people's memorabilia and stories; so many came forward and we have some amazing original costumes and stage sets on show.

This poster was lent to us by a guy called Krusher who says his life was changed by the Malvern gig. He later went on to present a TV programme about heavy metal in the 1980s while his graphic design work included record sleeves for former Sabbath singer Ozzy Osbourne.

Visitors to the exhibition can also dream of stardom by plugging in the supplied guitars and banging out their favourite riffs. They'll all be wearing headphones, though, so they don't bother other people in the museum."

Interview by John Holt.
The Home of Metal exhibition runs at the Gas Hall until 25 September. Additional Home of Metal events, conferences and film programmes are running at venues across the region, including Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the New Art Gallery Walsall

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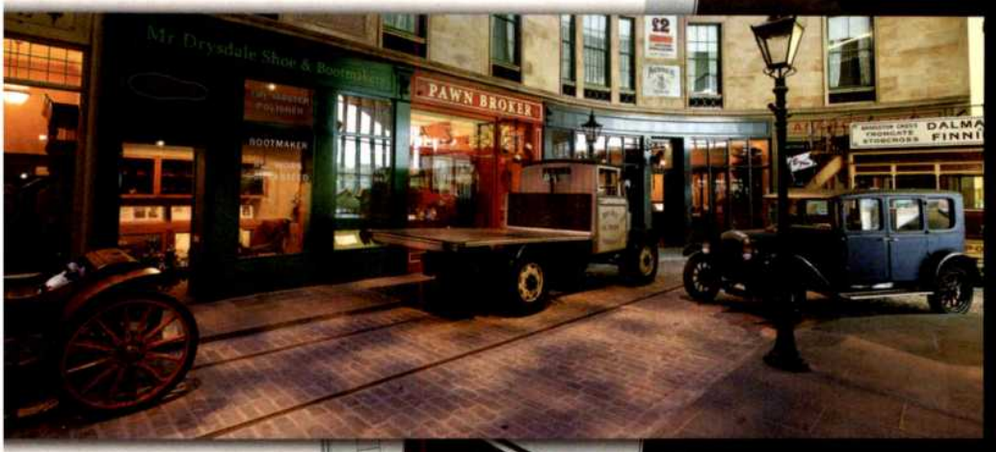

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Museums Journal

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to urban unrest

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Design Esterson Associates
Printed by Wyndeham Roche Limited
Subscription rates £105 UK; £160 overseas
Contributors Toby Butler, Stephen Feeke, Cressida Finch, Louise Gray, Oliver Green, Gareth Harris, Felicity Heywood, John Holt, Geraldine Kendall, Maev Kennedy, Hilary McGowan, Peter Mason, Deborah Mulhearn, Patrick Steel, Mark Suggitt, Hedley Swain

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Editorial 020 7426 6920
Advertising 020 7426 6930
Subscriptions 020 7426 6910
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www.museumsassociation.org
Museums Journal is published by the Museums Association (reg charity no 313024) and is editorially independent. Nothing should be taken to be the view of the MA unless stated. Museums Journal strives to avoid inaccuracies: if readers have a query or complaint they should contact the editor. Anyone who would like to contribute an article to Museums Journal is asked to first contact the editor.
ISSN 0-027-416-X

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Editorial

Creative thinking key to long-term success

It's been a busy summer for museum openings, with bumper crowds queuing around the blocks. The Riverside Museum in Glasgow attracted more than 400,000 visitors in its first six weeks and the National Museum of Scotland welcomed 100,000 through the doors in the first six days, while 10,000 queued to get in on the day the Museum of Liverpool opened.

But whatever the size and price of a redevelopment, or whether a prize-winning architect was involved, after the first rush of visitors, what counts is whether they return. After the novelty of the "newness" has worn off, is there actually anything worth seeing, and does the programming, interpretation and display provide enough depth and breadth to engage visitors?

Good programming, which is difficult but not impossible in these cash-strapped times, is a key ingredient. The Imperial War Museum North is an example of an organisation that invests in its temporary exhibition programme; its current show, War Correspondents, is a cracking illustration of a timely, well-researched and gripping display.

'I've visited many new and redeveloped museums over the summer, and some of the displays are shockingly dull and identikit'

Good interpretation and display also generate repeat visits. I've visited many new and redeveloped museums this summer, and some of the displays, considering how much they cost, are shockingly dull and identikit. It must be tempting to go for a "safe pair of hands" when choosing a design company for a big project, but this can sometimes lead to mediocre galleries that could be anywhere.

There are exceptions, of course. Manchester Museum's Living Worlds gallery is a playful and inspired redisplay of its natural history collection. And the Walker Art Gallery's British Art 1880-1950 successfully tries a new contextual approach to displays by rooting the art in the social context of the time.

It might be argued that it's difficult to take risks in a recession. But eschewing the safe option and allowing designers, staff and the public to be creative might be the answer to keeping your galleries alive.

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
sharon@museumsassociation.org
www.twitter.com/sharonheal
www.museumsassociation.org/cuts

Museums Association to repeat survey into impact of cuts on sector

Survey in 2012 would allow year-on-year comparisons to be made

Patrick Steel

Cuts monitor

The Museums Association (MA) has said it will repeat its survey on the impact of cuts on museum services across the UK.

Mark Taylor, the MA's director, said: "As valuable as the information that we gathered for the survey in July this year was, that value would be greatly enhanced by looking at the figures year-on- year.

"The MA will look to hold a similar survey in 2012 in order to extract useful data about long-term trends, allowing us to advocate in a more informed and purposeful way.

Mark Taylor: "The recent survey raised the plight of museums suffering from devastating funding cuts"

"The recent survey led to extensive coverage in national and local media, and raised the issue of the plight of those museums suffering the effects of devastating funding cuts."

The survey found that a fifth of museums have seen their budgets cut by 25% or more, leading them to lay off staff, reduce opening hours and cut back on education, outreach and public events.

The survey also highlighted anger and frustration in the sector over the scale and depth of the cuts, with 46% of respondents saying they expected the quality of service in their museum to decrease over the coming year.

www.museumsassociation.org/cutsmonitor

High court to rule on fate of Wedgwood collections

Works may be sold to cover pension deficit

Patrick Steel

The fate of the Wedgwood Museum's collections will be decided at Birmingham high court this month.

The hearing, which will take place over three days from 13 September, will decide whether the Wedgwood Museum Trust (WMT) is liable for the £135m pension deficit inherited from the Wedgwood Pension Plan Trustee Limited, which went into administration last year.

If the judgment goes against the WMT, the collections, which are valued at £20m, will be sold. They include 18th-century fine art and ceramics, as well as documents, manuscripts and factory equipment that belonged to Wedgwood's founder, Josiah Wedgwood I.

Writing on the Art and Artifice blog, Bruce Tattersall, a former curator of the museum, said: "Despite Ed Vaizey's assurance that the Victoria and Albert Museum could be involved in any dispersal of the collection, it may be, in the current economic climate, that the government may be unable or unwilling to organise a rescue.

The Wedgwood collections have been valued at £20m

"Such a result would be a disaster for the museum, Staffordshire and the nation. Individual items such as the Wedgwood Family portrait by George Stubbs with depictions of Josiah, his wife Sarah and their daughter Susannah, mother of Charles Darwin, would surely be refused an export licence.

"The dismemberment or export of the archive would be unthinkable. Whatever the court's decision, it will have a profound impact on the museum world."

● Check the Museums Association website for updates to this story.

Riots lead museums to rethink programming

Young people in areas of last month's unrest to be given more of a say in museum activities

Patrick Steel

Museums in areas affected by last month's riots have been looking at their programming in the light of the unrest.

The Public in West Bromwich hosted a debate about the riots chaired by community television channel Sangat TV, with a panel including local youths, a police inspector, a councillor, a member of the local youth service and an audience of young people. The museum is also looking for funding to allow young people to get involved in its programming.

Deborah Hedgecock, curator of the Bruce Castle Museum in Tottenham, which is only one street away from the Carpetright building that was burned down, said the museum was rethinking activities around the 26th anniversary of the Broadwater Farm riots next month.

ELAINE BANDELE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Bruce Castle Museum in north-east London is planning a project called Forgotten Gangs

Bruce Castle Museum is also planning a project called Forgotten Gangs, which will give a voice to young people who are not in gangs, reflecting a positive image of young people in the area.

The Museum of Liverpool is addressing the riots with an interactive exhibit in the People's Republic gallery that will gather visitor responses to the unrest.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery was close to the centre of the riots, and the council's head of arts and museums, Corinne Miller, said the city and museum service would be looking at ways in which they could address the unrest.

There are no reports of museum buildings having been damaged in the riots, but several organisations were forced to close early in areas where unrest occurred.

The National Maritime Museum, Hackney Museum, the Horniman Museum and Wolverhampton Art Gallery closed early, while outreach programmes at the Geffrye Museum and Bruce Castle Museum were curtailed.

Museums in affected areas suffered a significant fall in visitor figures, with some down by as much as 60% in the days following the unrest.

MA consults Scottish members on national strategy

Timing to coincide with MGS's consultation into strategy development

Patrick Steel

The Museums Association (MA) is to consult its members in Scotland over the future of the country's national strategy for museums.

The initiative will coincide with Museums Galleries Scotland's (MGS) publication of its consultation document into the strategy's development at its conference in Edinburgh on 16 September.

Mark Taylor, the MA's director, said: "As the biggest independent membership organisation in Scotland, with more than 400 members, we need to make sure that those voices are heard.

"Real progress and change will need some new resources to be invested and reallocated. But a good strategy will be effective, irrespective of new investment."

Asked what the strategy should address, Rowan Brown, director of the Scottish Mining Museum and a member of the MA's board of trustees, said: "Scotland needs an equitable funding structure. If the status quo prevails, the quality of service across the country will be seriously impaired.

The Scottish Mining Museum's director, Rowan Brown, is a member of the MA's board of trustees

"There should also be an emphasis on the educational value and social benefit of museums. Funding should be predicated not just on the quality of the collections, but also on how they are used."

Other issues that Brown would like the strategy to cover include the lack of direct funding for school visits to museums; the methodology for calculating visitor figures; succession planning for staff and volunteers; contemporary collecting; and partnership working between universities and museums.

The final strategy will be launched in January 2012.

In brief

Royal Armouries fall
Redundancies at the Royal Armouries in Leeds led to a 38% drop in visitor numbers during the first three months of 2011. The museum attributed the fall to the fact that it did not promote events during its restructure, along with the loss of its education team and jousting events. However, a spokeswoman said visitor numbers were starting to pick up.

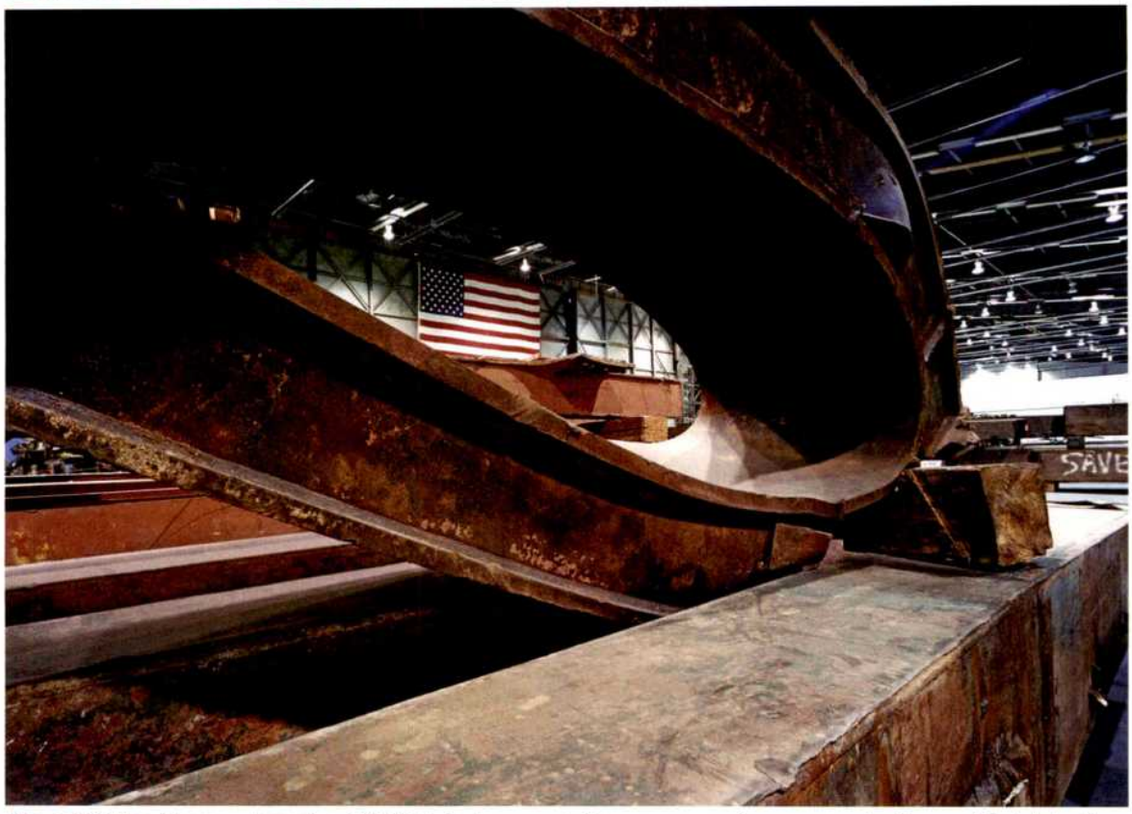
Tullie switches to trust
The management of the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery in Carlisle has transferred from Carlisle City Council to a new charitable trust. Under a 30-year partnership agreement, the buildings and collection will remain with the council, while a shadow trust board has overseen the lease of the buildings, collections management and the transfer of staff.

Amgueddfa Cymru bonus

A £600,000 grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation will enable National Museum Wales (Amgueddfa Cymru) to digitise a selection of works from its collection of 500,000 historic photographs. The initiative, entitled Natural Images, launches this autumn. The collection includes Remember, Remember, the 5th of November by John Dillwyn Llewelyn (above) and works by William Henry Fox Talbot.

Rowing museum initiative
The River & Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames has launched an education programme, Knowing Rowing, in the lead-up to the 2012 Olympic Games. Museum-based workshops and talks, along with rowing-club activity sessions, explore the history of rowing and the science of boat-building.

Lest we forget: photography exhibition at Imperial War Museum marks 10 years since 9/11



The exhibition Memory Remains: 9/11 Artefacts at Hangar 17 by Francesc Torres, at the Imperial War Museum in London, marks the 10th anniversary of the 11 September terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. Spanish-American photographer Torres, who was commissioned by the New York-based National September 11 Memorial & Museum, was given access to Hangar 17 at John F Kennedy International Airport, where debris cleared from the 16-acre Twin Towers site is stored. His images show the twisted steel beams, burnt-out fire engines and poignant mementoes, such as bicycles unclaimed by their owners, recovered from the site. The exhibition runs until 26 February.

Horses axed at Bradford

Industrial museum loses Horses at Work facility

Rebecca Atkinson

Bradford Metropolitan District Council has axed the Horses at Work attraction at Bradford Industrial Museum.

The unit costs Bradford Council about £154,000 a year. It is still in consultation with the four affected members of staff and external organisations that have expressed an interest in the museum's two Clydesdale horses.

Tony Stephens, assistant director for culture and tourism at Bradford council, said: "The retirement of the horses from the Industrial Museum is part of the £80m in savings that the council has to make over the next two years."

In May, the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds decided to outsource its jousting events, and made all nine of its horse-riders, actors and stable staff redundant.

New museums exceeding targets

Visitor numbers in first four weeks reach up to 57% of annual goals

Rebecca Atkinson

The number of visitors to six new museums and galleries have exceeded expectations, leading several to reassess annual targets.

The National Museum of Scotland, which reopened on 29 July, welcomed 311,000 visitors in its first three-and-a-half weeks – suggesting that it could surpass its annual target of one million.

A spokesman said that the annual target would now be reassessed.

The Museum of Liverpool is also revisiting its annual target. A spokesman said: "We predicted 78,000 visitors in the first month, but we got 250,000. Our original target now looks conservative."

M Shed surpassed 25% of its annual visitor target within four weeks of opening

The Hepworth Wakefield in Yorkshire has already doubled its annual target to 300,000 after welcoming 85,000 people in its first four weeks of opening. However, with the gallery set to surpass the 200,000 mark this month, even the new figure looks conservative.

The Riverside Museum has averaged almost 10,000 visitors a day since opening on 21 June. However, it does not plan to update its annual target of 800,000.

Likewise, the Turner Contemporary in Margate is sticking to its 156,000 annual visitor target, despite a footfall of 79,477 in its first four weeks.

M Shed in Bristol welcomed 68,272 people through its doors in the first four weeks of opening. Its annual target is 250,000.

Visitor numbers at new museums

	Annual target	Total in first four weeks
Hepworth Wakefield	150,000*	85,000
M Shed	250,000	68,272
Museum of Liverpool	750,000	250,000
National Museum of Scotland	1,000,000	311,000**
Riverside Museum	800,000	284,860
Turner Contemporary	156,000	79,477

*subsequently revised to 300,000 **total refers to first three-and-a-half weeks

RICHARD BRYANT/ARCHIMAGE.CO.UK (M SHED); FRANCESC TORRES (LEFT)

BM closes Paul Hamlyn library after budget cuts

Eleven staff affected by move to offset 15% cut in grant-in-aid budget

Gareth Harris

The Paul Hamlyn public library at the British Museum (BM), which is home to more than 50,000 books and journals, closed last month as part of a cost-cutting exercise.

A BM spokeswoman said it regretted having to close the library as part of efforts to accommodate a 15% cut to the museum's grant-in-aid budget.

The move was criticised by Annie Mauger, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

"We are sad and very concerned about the closure of the Paul Hamlyn library, she said. "This collection is not only live and valuable to learners and researchers today, but also has great historic value in its own right.

"I wrote to [director] Neil MacGregor about the proposals some time ago and did not receive a reply.

"We asked to know what the plans were for looking after this collection – and that remains a great concern.

"Above all, we are concerned about the library staff and the loss of expertise to the British Museum.

BRITISH MUSEUM

GILMAR RIBEIRO

Nine staff at the Paul Hamlyn library have taken voluntary redundancy

Librarians are key to providing access to the knowledge contained in collections."

The Historic Libraries Forum has also raised concerns about staff redundancies and the future of the library collection.

The BM canvassed 11 staff members as part of a 90-day internal consultation about the future of the library. Two members of staff have been redeployed and nine have taken voluntary redundancy.

"Several are serving notice periods and the museum will keep them informed of future redeployment opportunities as they become available," said the BM spokeswoman.

She added that the museum was looking into how the books housed in the library "can best be managed so that they continue to be used for the maximum benefit of the museum".

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation declined to comment but Robert Dufton, director of the foundation, told Museums Journal in June that he would be "disappointed" to see the library close, stressing the library's role in "enabling effective and deep learning".

The library's collections cover the range of world cultures represented in the museum and include material relating to the history and development of the BM. The facility also houses a collection of rare books from the House of Commons.

DCMS to cut spend on voluntary sector by £104m

Sector to lose £2.8bn in total over six-year period

Gareth Harris

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is to spend £104m less on the voluntary and community sector from 2011 to 2016, according to a report by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

Counting the Cuts states: "Cumulatively, the voluntary and community sector stands to lose £2.8bn from the government over the current spending review period."

The NCVO has estimated the government's spending plans by extrapolating from future expenditure forecasts provided by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

The NCVO also obtained data from government departments and local authorities with regard to their planned spending on voluntary organisations during the same period.

Voluntary organisations have been hard hit by the cuts

"Central government must collect and publish a comprehensive and robust analysis of its total spending on the voluntary and community sector, the impact of cuts to the sector and an evaluation of the resultant cost/benefit to government," concludes the report.

In brief

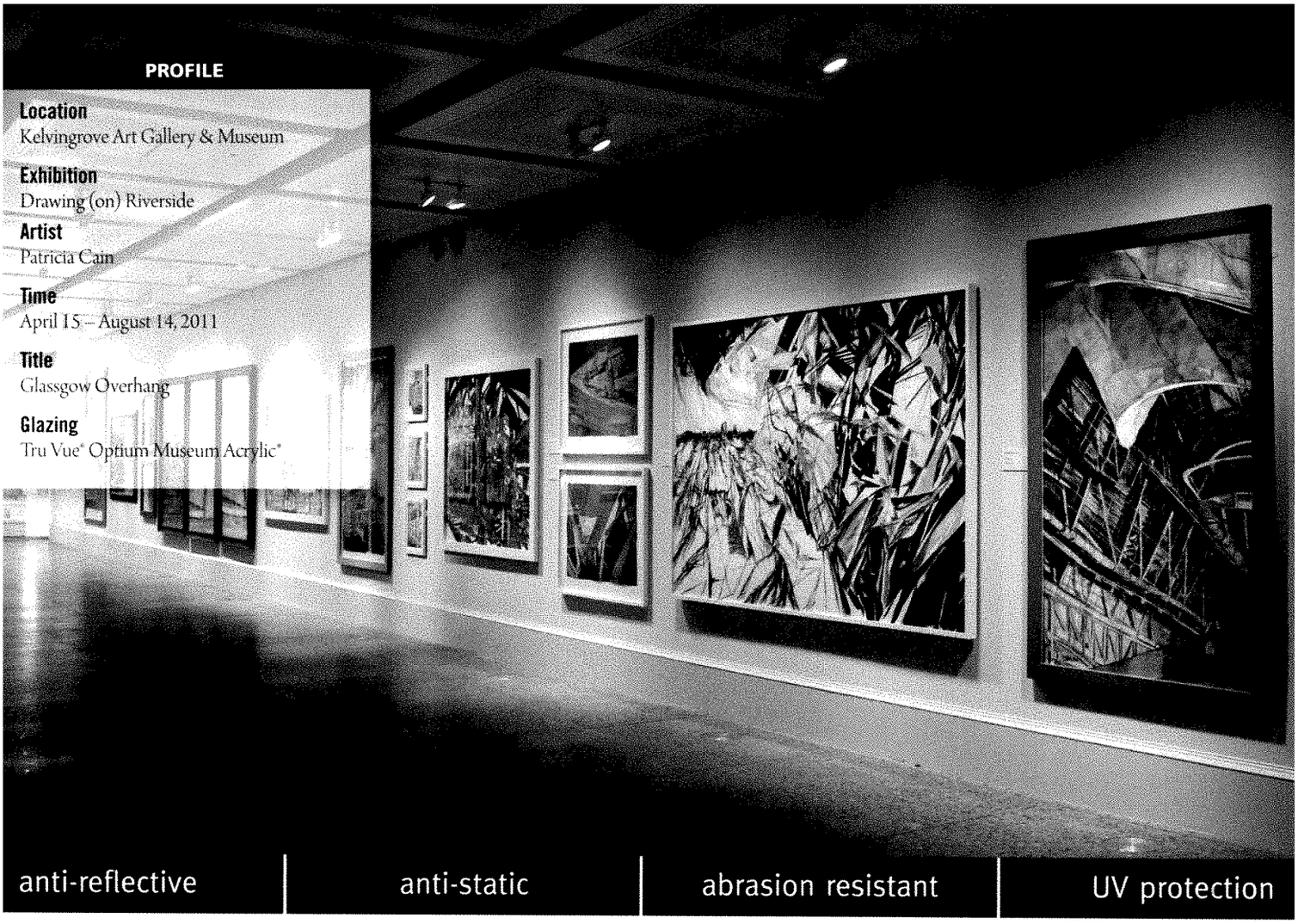
Story Museum architect
The Story Museum in Oxford has moved a step closer to opening a £3.5m visitor attraction and learning centre after appointing architects Purcell Miller Tritton to design the facility. The centre is scheduled to open in 2014 to coincide with Oxford's attempt to become Unesco's World Book capital.

Big Brother initiative

Experts from Northumberland Archives and the Woodhorn Museum were on hand for five days last month to make 1840s Heritage Big Brother, a creative programme of events designed to give 50 young locals a taste of 19th-century rural life. While resident at Featherstone Castle, in Northumberland, the participants performed tasks and filmed themselves for a documentary that will go into Woodhorn's archive.

Collections Link upgrade
Collections Link, the online tool for museums and heritage professionals, has revamped its website. The site boasts a broader interface with mobile devices and social networking, as well as a subject-orientated structure that will help people search under their area of expertise. *www.collectionslink.org.uk*

Berwick museum floods
The Berwick Museum & Art Gallery will operate with reduced opening hours for the rest of the season following water damage to its attic storerooms and first-floor Burrell Gallery. The museum's fine-art collection has been moved to the nearby Woodhorn Museum for safe-keeping. The Berwick-upon-Tweed museum, which opens seasonally and closes at the end of this month, will reopen at Easter 2012.



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Nationals establish trusts to draw down reserves

New organisations will allow museums to draw down half their £268m

Patrick Steel

National museums have opted to set up trusts to oversee their reserves, following the government's decision to allow them to draw down half of their £268m worth of holdings.

Treasury restrictions meant that a new mechanism had to be found to release the money, and the idea came about after lengthy talks with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Treasury.

A paper published in March by the National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC), in response to the government green paper Giving, noted that the restrictions on spending were "positively damaging from a charitable perspective, where reserves comprise donations and self-generated income".

However, it stated that independent trusts were "a cumbersome and awkward structure designed to accommodate heavy-handed bureaucracy, rather than encourage philanthropy".

The British Museum has designated £42.5m from its reserves to fund its World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre

Legal and finance specialist Adrian Babbidge of Egeria, who regards independent trusts as another step towards the increasingly mixed funding that national museums have followed for years, warned that a board of independent trustees distinct from the museum's trustees could bring problems.

"In certain circumstances, there can be conflict," he said. "There is always the potential for division of mission between the fundraising trust and the operating trust."

Several museums have already begun the process. Neil Greenwood, director of finance and corporate services at the Natural History Museum, which has reserves of £7m, said the museum expected to draw down £1.2m from its reserves, and was in talks about setting up an independent trust.

The British Museum Trust Limited was registered with the Charity Commission in March, and the museum has designated £42.5m from its existing reserves to fund its World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre, due to be completed at the end of 2013.

The Imperial War Museum is looking to draw down £2.75m from reserves and is recruiting trustees for its IWM Development Trust, which aims to begin operating at the end of the year.

Commonwealth museum appoints interim chief

Police investigation into missing objects ongoing

Gareth Harris

The beleaguered British Empire and Commonwealth Museum (BECM), which closed its Bristol base in 2008, has hired an interim chief executive while a police investigation is underway into the alleged unauthorised disposal of objects from the collection.

The museum's chair of trustees, Neil Cossons, confirmed that John Mott, the new chief executive, has put together a new business plan for the institution, covering issues such as corporate hire of the Grade I-listed museum at the former Temple Meads railway station.

Cossons also said that relocating the museum to London, a proposal first put forward in 2008, is no longer an option in the "current financial circumstances".

He declined to comment on whether the Bristol building would reopen.

The BECM left its Bristol base in 2008

Mott replaces the BECM's former director Gareth Griffiths, who was dismissed from his post in March.

Griffiths's solicitors said in a statement: "Any objects were disposed with the knowledge and agreement of the trustees."

A police statement said: "The police are investigating the theft of several items from the BECM in Bristol. An investigation is underway to find the person responsible."

Funding news

Science lessons

Science and discovery centres have been plagued by a **lack of revenue funding** since many came into being around the millennium.

Despite government recognition for the role they play in **engaging young people** in particular, with science and technology, core funding is unlikely to be forthcoming anytime soon.

For science centres and museums looking for funding, there are several organisations that run grants programmes.

The **Royal Society** has several rolling grant schemes that support individuals and areas of work such as public engagement and education.

Its **Partnership Grants** scheme is currently open for applications. The scheme offers up to **£3,000** to support teachers, scientists and engineers working together to inspire young people. Funds are available for projects working with students between the ages of five and 19, as long as the project involves a UK school or college, and a practising scientist or engineer. The next round for applications closes on 5 November.

The **Wellcome Trust**, as well as giving capital funding to science centres and museums for major projects that engage the public with science or make the history of medicine relevant to contemporary audiences, has several grant schemes. These include the **People Awards** to fund projects such as exhibitions and debates; **Arts Awards** to support imaginative arts projects that create new works to investigate biomedical science; and **Society Awards** to support larger projects with a national or regional impact.

www.royalsociety.org/partnership
www.wellcome.ac.uk/funding/public-engagement/index.htm

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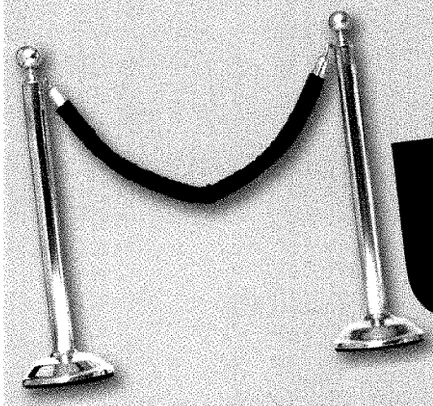

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Called to the Baa: Manchester Art Gallery to host exhibition of Ford Madox Brown paintings

Manchester Art Gallery is hosting an exhibition focusing on the city's links with Victorian painter Ford Madox Brown. The exhibition, Ford Madox Brown: Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer, features studies for Brown's decorative paintings commissioned for the Royal Manchester Jubilee exhibition of 1887, while 12 murals at Manchester Town Hall will be open to the public. The exhibition, divided into 11 thematic sections, includes epic pieces such as The Last of England and The Pretty Baa-Lambs (above). The exhibition runs from 24 September until 29 January.

RNIB guide to accessibility

Blind visitors to benefit from improved facilities

Rebecca Atkinson

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has published a guide on how museums and galleries can make their collections more accessible to blind and partially-sighted visitors.

Shifting Perspectives builds on the work carried out during CultureLink, a 12-month programme by the RNIB and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council that aimed to offer blind and partially-sighted people access to the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.
www.rnib.org.uk

● The September issue of Museum Practice will explain how museums can become more accessible to blind and partially-sighted visitors through audio descriptive and touch tours, and the use of new technology.
www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice

Draft planning framework 'overlooks culture'

Draft paper fails to recognise relationship between environment and museum collections

Gareth Harris

Key culture professionals and organisations have questioned the draft National Planning Policy Framework published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July.

Planning minister Greg Clark said in the foreword that the proposed 58-page framework would allow "people and communities back into planning".

The cultural heritage of national parks, retail and leisure developments are discussed in the document, but there is no mention of museums or galleries.

The Hepworth Wakefield is integral to the regeneration of the Wakefield waterfront

Iain Watson, director of Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums, said: "Recognition of the relationship of museum collections to the landscape and environment from which they come and, more generally, an acknowledgement of the value of cultural services, rather than simply leisure, within the planning process would be welcome."

Meanwhile, Alan Davey, chief executive of Arts Council England (ACE), said: "The Arts Council will be making a response to the consultation, emphasising the value of culture as well as heritage."

He added that ACE would like to see the policy framework acknowledge the importance of the social value of arts and culture, as well as focusing on the buildings and spaces which form England's cultural infrastructure, stressing that arts organisations are "vital" to cities countrywide.

In a statement, the National Campaign for the Arts (NCA) said: "We warmly welcome a more simplified planning system. However, we are deeply concerned that culture is not afforded the same status as sports, heritage and leisure within the current proposals."

The NCA urged "all those who care about the cultural sector" to respond to the draft framework. The consultation process closes on 17 October.

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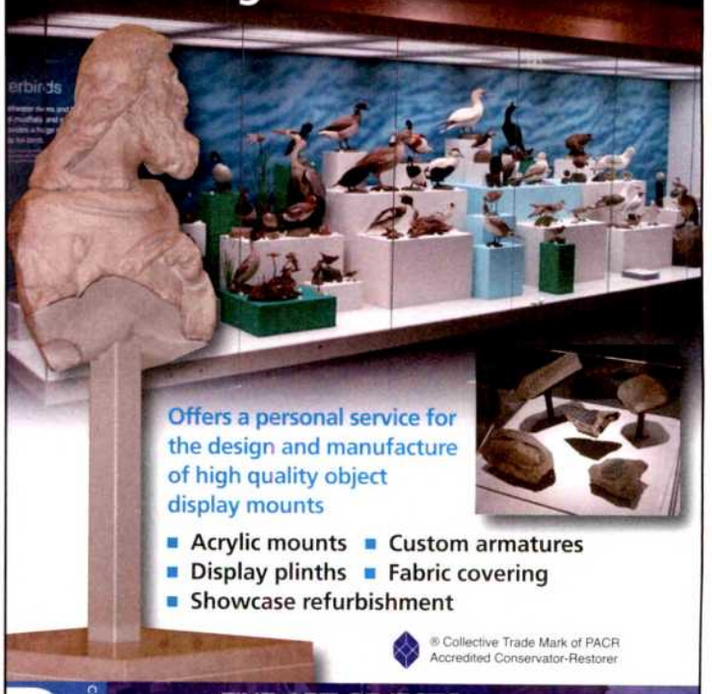

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Spate of rhino horn thefts from museums continues

Demand for rhino horn as alternative medicine leads to break-ins

Rebecca Atkinson

Ipswich Museum has become the latest to be targeted by a criminal gang stealing rhino horns.

At the end of July, thieves broke into the Suffolk museum and hacked off a rhino horn from a stuffed exhibit and stole a separate rhinoceros skull.

Earlier in the month, a stuffed rhino head was stolen from the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences in Liège, Belgium.

The Metropolitan Police said there had been at least 20 incidents of rhino horn theft from museums, auction houses and private collections across the UK and Europe during the first six months of 2011.

According to law enforcement agency Europol, the recent spate of thefts is the work of an Irish gang.

The horn of Ipswich Museum's Rosie the Rhino was stolen over the summer

Rhino horn is worth more than £50,000 per kilo – more than diamonds, gold and cocaine. Its value is fuelled by claims that it can cure cancer and reverse the effects of a stroke. This has led to a rise in the illegal poaching of rhinos in the wild.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has now called for an international clampdown on the illegal sales of rhino horn and tighter restrictions on the trade in rhino products.

Museums have been advised to remove rhino horn from display.

Paolo Viscardi, natural history curator at the Horniman Museum, London, said horns on taxidermy displays could be replaced with artificial casts.

"This isn't an easy solution – it's expensive and I'm sure lots of people won't agree with it – but museums have to be as vigilant as possible against this ongoing problem," he said.

Viscardi added that arsenic traditionally used in taxidermy meant that horns might be harmful if consumed.

Gallery opens next month

Focus will be on art from regional collections

Gareth Harris

Two Temple Place, a gallery that will showcase art from regional collections, will open next month at a neo-Renaissance mansion in London.

The opening show will feature highlights from the collection of the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, which closed in April for a 15-month renovation. It will run from 27 October to 29 January 2012.

The Bulldog Trust, which bought the building in 1999, has funded the refurbishment of the space. It plans to hold regional art shows annually.

The trust's chief executive Mary Rose Gunn, said revenue streams were being sought for the project.

"We are very excited to be talking to a few organisations – collections, curators and potential partners – about the second exhibition, which will open in 2013."

World news digest

Austria: A museum dedicated to the film star and former governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, has opened in the village in which he was born, Thal. The museum, located in the bodybuilder's former family home, houses his childhood bed, dumb-bells and a sword from the film Conan the Barbarian.

China: Budi Tek, a Chinese-Indonesian collector, plans to open his own museum complex in Shanghai by 2013, which will show works from his holdings and host temporary exhibitions. The new institution, with 8,000 sqm of display space, will be called De Museum. Tek's collection includes works by Maurizio Cattelan and Anselm Kiefer.

France: The French Culture Ministry has given €6.4m towards the refurbishment of the Rodin Museum in Paris. Work is due to start in 2012 and last two years. New rooms will be dedicated to Rodin's collection of Middle Eastern drawings and sculptures.

Greece: US secretary of state Hillary Clinton has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Greek minister of foreign affairs, Stavros Lambrinidis, making it illegal for protected works of art to enter the US without the approval of Greek authorities. The new agreement, which has yet to be ratified by the Greek government, aims to curb looting.

Ivory Coast: Artefacts worth about $6m were stolen from the Museum of Civilization in Abidjan during a recent battle for the city between forces loyal to current president Alassane Ouattara and former leader Laurent Gbagbo. Among the items taken were a 19th-century royal sabre and 35 18th-century gold pendants.

US: An exhibition devoted to the fashion pieces of the late UK designer Alexander McQueen, which closed last month at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, attracted 661,409 visitors, placing it among the institution's top 10 most-visited shows. During the three-month run, more than 23,000 new members joined the museum.

Alexander McQueen's Savage Beauty, Gallery View – The Romantic Mind

US: New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) is raising its admission fee this month to $25, an increase of $5, as a result of escalating costs. Visitors aged under 16 will continue to get free entry. MoMA director Glenn Lowry received an $830,000 salary in 2009 along with $403,635 benefits and housing in the museum's luxury condominium valued at $318,000.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, New York Times, Bloomberg, BBC Online and the Guardian

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The future starts here

Document offers glimpse of ACE's long-term plans for the museum sector

Geraldine Kendall

It may seem a long time since the government announced the abolition of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), but the integration of museums and libraries into Arts Council England's (ACE) remit has stepped up a gear in recent months.

ACE is adamant that, despite its challenging funding situation, the upcoming changeover should be seen as an opportunity to unify the arts and culture sectors, with talk of building partnerships, sharing investment and promoting the key role of arts and culture in civic life.

ACE published its 10-year strategic framework for the arts, Achieving Great Art for Everyone, at the end of last year. As it was compiled before the MLA transition was confirmed, the document needed updating, and ACE commissioned Labour peer Estelle Morris to determine how its goals for the arts sector corresponded with those for museums and libraries – and how they differed.

Goals for museums

A final strategy is due out this month, but in the meantime, the museum sector has already had a glimpse of what ACE's long-term ambitions for museums and galleries might look like, with the release of an "ice-breaker" document in July that outlined Morris's findings.

The Morris review analysed ACE's five existing goals in terms of how they could apply to the museum sector. The goals – which cover areas such as a commitment to excellence, boosting community engagement and fostering sustainability and resilience – will eventually form part of the assessment criteria for museums seeking Renaissance funding.

Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust failed to get National Portfolio funding but could apply for ACE's major grant programme

Morris consulted extensively with bodies such as the Museums Association (MA), the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and the National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC), and her review acknowledged many of the sector's concerns about how museums would fit into the existing framework.

Funding model

Some key omissions in ACE's original strategy, as identified by Morris, included the different ways in which excellence is measured; museum audiences being seen as active participants and co-producers, rather than passive receivers; and recognition of how buildings and collections can foster a sense of place and identity.

However, there are still worries that Morris's report perpetuates several misconceptions.

One example, according to David Fleming, director of National Museums Liverpool, is that Morris's first goal – a commitment to excellence – focused on the quality of collections and curatorial expertise, and failed to cite museums' commitment to community participation and learning as a measure of excellence – an area in which it is widely acknowledged that museums have been pioneers.

In addition, the MA has queried ACE's proposal that museums should be required to meet any two of the five goals in their applications for funding, instead calling for the second goal, which covers engagement with people and demonstrable public benefit, to be made compulsory for all applicants.

Maurice Davies, the MA's head of policy, says this would reflect the widespread desire among museums to prioritise community impact – a view borne out by a consultation into Morris's review conducted by the MA in July.

The MA's survey, which garnered 65 responses from a wide range of museums and staff, found that most valued engagement more than other common themes such as learning and access to collections.

By and large, though, the feeling in the museum sector is that ACE appears to be listening to its views. The organisation's announcement in August of a new approach to the £43m Renaissance in the Regions funding scheme underlined this.

The Arts Council decision to move away from the planned New Renaissance, which was envisaged by the MLA amid a very different funding landscape, has been largely welcomed. The model was described as "disruptive" by AIM and criticised by the MA as "risky and untested".

Funding model

Instead of the Core museums model, which would have distributed funding through a network of 10 to 12 museums with no regional remit, ACE is now proposing a major grant programme similar to its National Portfolio scheme. The application process will accept submissions from non-national museums and consortia.

The grant scheme, which will start taking applications in September, is to appoint nearly double the number of regional museums proposed under the Core museums model, and these will play a much wider leadership role in the regions.

ACE also revealed that a strategic support fund would replace the MLA's proposed Challenge Fund and announced that £3m of Renaissance money would be invested in museum development, though full details of both funding streams are yet to be released.

The sector has faced a long period of upheaval since the demise of the MLA; this summer's progress means that the picture for some may finally be clearer in the months ahead.

● See comment, p16

ACE's goals at a glance

- Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated.
- More people experience the arts and are inspired by them.
- The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative.
- The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled.
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.

Quality of experience and engagement is key

Hedley Swain

Estelle Morris's review of Arts Council England's (ACE) ten-year strategy Achieving Great Art for Everyone (AGAFE) and its five goals provide useful food for thought for the museum sector and ACE. For the sector, it's an opportunity to reappraise its own recent priorities and what they should be for the future. For ACE, it is of fundamental importance in providing a vision and focus for its funding of Renaissance.

When I first considered AGAFE, I was struck by how well the five strategic goals it sets out fitted museum priorities (increasing number and quality of visitor experience; investing in the quality of leadership and the diversity of the workforce; ensuring organisations were sustainable and resilient). But I agree with Estelle that two of those goals are more challenging and need discussion.

AGAFE's first goal talks about talent and artistic excellence thriving and being celebrated; its fifth goal calls for every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.

The museum sector's investment in children and young people has been truly impressive, with many museums now at capacity in terms of serving schools. There are very few museums that do not echo to the sound of excited schoolchildren on most days. Museums have now moved beyond simply serving schools and are working on wider lifelong-learning agendas. Is there anything new we can do for children? We should always be looking to raise the bar and be innovative in our approach, but I believe that this is an area where the museums sector has expertise to offer the arts as they seek to increase engagement with children.

The first goal poses a different sort of challenge. What does excellence look like in museums, and how is it different to excellence in other cultural and art forms?

One answer is collections. Estelle makes the point that collections are the distinct USP of museums in comparison to ACE's other cultural forms. Our collections should be excellent, as should be the way we care for them. They should contain objects of true distinction and true value to society. Many are, but we also need to acknowledge that at present some museums hold, and invest resources in, collections that are at best mundane and at worst, valueless.

However, collections are only the starting point (just as the written play is for theatre). True excellence comes from the quality of our engagement with audiences. The very best museum experience is inspiring and life changing. It should be memorable and provide a new perspective and understanding of the world.

I believe that one of the many advantages to come from museums being under a wider artistic remit will be that we can really emphasise the distinctiveness of the museum experience. Social benefit will of course still be hugely important, but we also need to do more to translate the passion and expertise we have for our collections, and the stories they tell, into excellent engagement with our audiences.

Really excellent museums will use valuable and distinct collections to engage and inspire their audiences. Perhaps in recent years the Renaissance programme has concentrated too much on trying to demonstrate social value and less on the quality of the experiences that it was helping to create. We now have an opportunity to get that balance right.

Hedley Swain is director, programme delivery, at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. He joins the Arts Council England as director, museums and Renaissance, this autumn

The diary of a national museum director *Part 15*

These are exciting times. On the Monday of the riots, Sir M called all the London national museum directors to an emergency meeting at the National Gallery.

"The oiks have really crossed a line this time," he said. "I had to leave my Merc at home this morning. My wife has just rung to say that Harvey Nics is closed. And the Savoy has cancelled our booking for dinner tonight. I want my London back."

One director said the problem was that parents and teachers failed to instil discipline and values. He suggested that the state schools attended by the louts copy his old alma mater and introduce fagging.

Sir N reminded us that, when the chartists marched on London in 1848 to demand democracy, the British Museum barricaded its perimeters, armed its staff and ordered them to shoot the protestors. "We could do the same, and call it the Big Society," he suggested.

Sir M proposed we issue a statement condemning people who steal, are obsessed with consumer goods, don't care about anyone else, don't pay taxes, and destroy the society in which they live – until it was pointed out that he had just described his collecting policy and the profile of his biggest donor.

"Then I will punish the protestors," he said, "by cancelling all community outreach projects and withdrawing Worthless, my loan exhibition of broken pottery, from Hackney Museum".

Just then Sir N's fragrant personal assistant Jocasta rushed in. "Director," she cried, "did you hear that the police have charged a millionaire's daughter with theft, arson and criminal damage? Well, she's on the phone now. It's your girl, Tamara."

Is getting rid of an old tractor any different to disposing of art work?

Hilary McGowan

I recently attended the Canadian Museums Association's annual conference. As in the UK, the Canadian museum sector is discussing what they call the D-word, although they call it de-accessioning, not disposal. My experience in Canada has made me think again about our attitude to disposal and the UK Museums Association's (MA) ethical framework.

Recent and current high-profile disposals have been of fine art at auction, although when London's Science Museum advertised several tractors for disposal, no one batted an eyelid. As there was so little response, the disposal was circulated round the Rural Museums Network's joint information service mail in case rural museums missed it.

Is the outcry about disposals of paintings solely because of the large figures associated with fine art? You could say that a tractor is a mass-produced object, so not unique like a painting, but there is more than this simple difference. There is a snobbery that causes a hierarchy of objects. Is the disposal debate about the value of collections and holding them in trust for the public, or is it about how we, the museum sector, value some types of collections (art) more than others (tractors)? What sort of example are we setting?

The MA's code of ethics was written in 1972 in response to sales of collections by local authorities (are they always the villains of the piece?), so the situation that gave birth to it is similar to today's. At the recent disposal seminar organised by Farrer's, the code was referred to time and again as vital and the only mechanism for making these decisions. As the spending cuts bite deeper, what price do we pay for this framework if some governing bodies ignore it? How can we make them see the difference between desirable de-accessioning and financially motivated disposal – specifically forbidden in the code?

I spoke in support of the change to the code in 2007. As a consultant I have seen too many museum stores full of neglected, decaying objects: bulk archaeology, crumbling architectural fragments, rusty flat-irons, engravings and paintings flaking, foxed and forgotten. There is limited market value in these objects in such unloved states, but I still believe that disposing of them for the benefit of the rest of the collections is the correct thing to do. Others may have use for these objects even if we do not but the sector does not consider private owners as "suitable" to care for even decaying museum objects.

In Canada, the MA's framework is admired and envied as they have no equivalent to our code, to accreditation or even the AMA, and they seem unable to start creating their own. Even if there are flaws in our ethical system, it is a force for good and we are in a stronger position to have these difficult conversations with the code rather than without it. That way chaos lies.

Hilary McGowan is a museums consultant and executive coach

The insider

A frown is a smile when you stand on your head

Maev Kennedy

Result! And to think it seemed such a disaster when our Olympics Wing builders went bust just as the Millennium Atrium started to leak so badly – even when it's not raining, which, I have to admit, is somewhat worrying.

Frankly, even if the roof had held, getting another exhibition in would have been tricky now that we've had to let early Roman, late medieval and dear, dear Victorian go – we can't expect our superb interns to get up to speed immediately, and I'm still not entirely happy with their object-handling skills, although I accept that the cast-iron bath in the disabled lift was a one-off.

But as our work experience genius says, "A frown is a smile when you stand on your head". To get a new exhibition free, installation done for us, all the artefacts donated – well, words fail me. But not the Advertiser: "chillingly on the ball", as they put it; "A must-see for hoodies and concerned parents alike."

Those unspeakable curling lino floor tiles that the rioters ripped up; those ghastly Festival of Britain souvenirs they pulverised; the hideous hessian display boards they torched; the bits of paving stone and benches from the precinct they left piled up; it just could not be better. And since we added the CCTV on a loop, the bit showing them climbing the giraffe to get at the ichthyosaur... well, you've seen the figures, we can't keep the kids out.

And then the Broom flashmob turning up the morning after and doing such a spectacular job with buckets and Marigolds – the broken glass is absolutely gleaming – that I've been able to cancel the cleaning contract until Christmas.

Frankly, I don't think anyone noticed that we had actually already closed for the whole month before the riot got here – except that wretched woman from the Friends of the Shoe Buckles Gallery, and even the Advertiser has stopped printing her cascades of letters.

Onward! Though we are going to have to talk about the Olympics soon, we can't expect to get this lucky every time.

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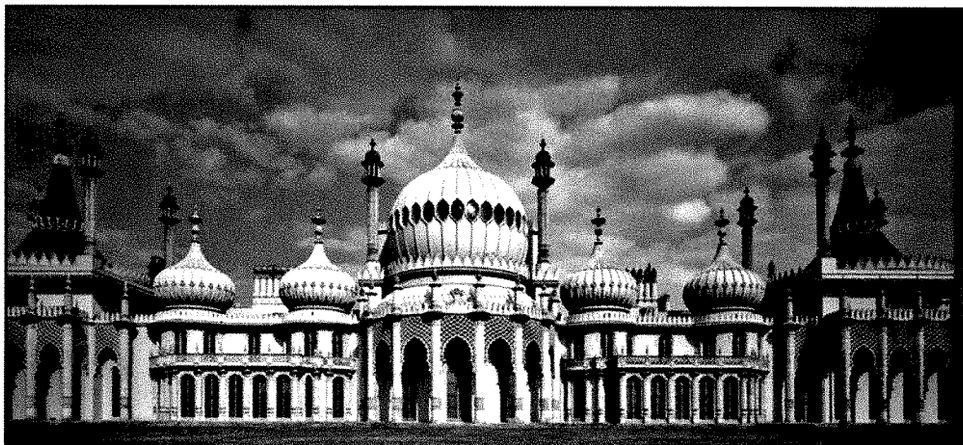

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Investing in training and skills makes sense

Toby Butler

So how does it feel to work in the museums and heritage sector in the middle of some of the most savage government cuts in a generation? I wouldn't mind guessing that, for many of you, it looks pretty damn bleak. Jobs and funding slashed, museums shut down and volunteers set to fill what were once salaried posts.

This month, the University of East London and Birkbeck, University of London, launch a raft of new postgraduate courses in heritage studies. In the face of all this, you might be forgiven for thinking we must have taken leave of our senses.

Well, the timing of these new courses is far from coincidental. The simple reason is that a recession is a good time for retraining. Redundancies and the trend to replace full-time posts with part-time contracts mean that many people will have time to invest in updating their portfolio. In-house training is often the first casualty of over-stretched budgets, so existing staff need to keep a careful eye on their own development, such as keeping up to speed with digital and online skills, for example. For this reason, I think it is important for the higher-education sector to offer the flexibility of part-time and evening courses.

I also hope we can make some inroads into bringing people on and up the career ladder. The local demographic means that our students from a great range of ethnic backgrounds – in fact, our student body is one of the most diverse in the country. The Museums Association has fought a long campaign on increasing staff diversity. The results have been encouraging, but overall, progress has been painfully slow, particularly the levels above that of the 'shop floor'. I hope that having heritage sector training available at the heart of the most diverse communities in the UK will offer a local and convenient stepping stone into the industry for our own graduates.

I have worked in the museum sector in one way or another for 20 years, and it still seems tricky to make the leap from, say, a gallery attendant to an archivist, a curator or an education officer – which is why I think it is important for the sector to have access to directly relevant courses that will give people a real insight into what these roles entail.

Looking to the longer term, I don't think that our sector's future prospects are actually so bleak. Public interest in the past seems, if anything, stronger than ever. Museum and gallery visitor numbers are strong. And the Olympic Games are coming. Like it or not, the eyes of the world will be on the UK and thousands of visitors will surely follow. So this really isn't a bad time for thinking about what skills we all need to help build the sector of the future.

Toby Butler is the leader of the heritage studies programme at the Raphael Samuel History Centre, University of East London

From where I'm standing

African bank is committed to art of the continent

Felicity Heywood

How often do we hear Africans described as: creative, beautiful, industrious and hopeful? Not that often in the western media.

But I am pleased that this is the description given by the new partners of Tate – one of the main African banks operating in Africa. In fact, Segun Agbaje of the Guaranty Trust Bank gives us more. "At Guaranty Trust Bank, we believe that art is an intricate part of the African heritage and a complete reflection of everything it means to be African; creative, beautiful, industrious and hopeful," he says. "This conviction has led to our involvement in numerous art-promoting initiatives over the years and is the bedrock for this new partnership with Tate."

This partnership follows the bank's sponsorship of the Chris Ofili retrospective at Tate Britain last year and also Yinka Shonibare's Nelson's Ship in a Bottle which graces Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth. It's thanks to Guaranty that the wider UK community can enjoy African art.

The three-year partnership involves a new curatorial post at Tate Modern to focus on African art, an acquisition fund to enable Tate to enhance its holdings of work by African artists, and an annual project in London and an African city to enable artists, curators, collectors and cultural institutions internationally to get involved.

It is fitting that Nigeria, the region that historically gave the world some astounding art, takes the lead on researching and highlighting not only contemporary art across Africa, but also engendering an understanding of the impact of art from the world's second-largest continent.

I am impressed with the bank having the foresight to not only concentrate on the contemporary, but to share the knowledge with the world of Africa's traditional artistic practices. Not only will it do this through the partnership, but it funds an annual festival in Nigeria that aims to restimulate interest in the lost art of bronze casting through workshops and exhibitions.

Tate promises it will be "giving African art the focus it deserves with audiences around the world". I look forward to that.

I was there: the significance of community history

We were very interested to read Louise Gray's article on museums and festivals and echo the benefits of targeting these events for engaging those harder-to-reach audiences (*Museums Journal July/August 2011, p34*). In Leeds, we too have a large music festival and see this as a great opportunity for engagement, but have taken a different tack.

Rather than setting up a stall at last month's Leeds festival, we used it as a vehicle for community engagement and contemporary collecting. Since 2009 we have worked with the festival organisers, performers, volunteers and attendees to build an archive of objects, film, audio and photographs from the point of view of the people involved.

This year, we recruited a small volunteer team to go to the festival and collect material on our behalf to capture the event and develop our contemporary archive. It has worked tremendously well as a means of evaluating our existing collections and driving collecting in a new direction, as a programme bringing us new audiences both as museum visitors and active participants in our community history programme, and as a means for us to capture a facet of Leeds life through the experiences of those who can say, "I was there".

Marek Romaniszyn, assistant curator, community history, and Camilla Nichol, head of collections, Leeds Museums and Galleries

Get real

I was shocked to see that, in the Museums Associations online poll, there was, at last count, a 60/40 split against having a more business-minded attitude towards museums (*http://preview.tinyurl.com/42ugwre*). Some argue that business sense compromises cultural values, but this doesn't have to be the case. If museums were happy to chase funding to serve their needs, then taking a more commercial, business-minded stance now is no worse a thing.

As with collections management and disposals, if a museum is happy to take on and manage a collection, then it should also be prepared to ensure that it able to fulfil that duty. We have long passed the time when we could sit back and take, take, take from the public purse; with the loss of Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, we now have a weaker national voice. It's time to take stock and begin managing, rather than building and defending.

Peter Davies, cultural policy advisor, Canterbury City Council

Active remembrance

I was pleased that you featured some of the events to mark International Slavery Remembrance Day on 23 August (*Museums Journal July/August 2011, p13*). Commemoration was given government approval in 2007 in a press release issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, which said this day should be "adopted as the focal date for national commemorations in the years to come".

Unlike the Holocaust Memorial Day, 'Slavery Day' receives limited or no public attention each year. Museums have led the way by organising events and activities. In spite of government cuts, it is important that museums continue to support a commemoration that deserves national recognition.

Arthur Torrington, Equiano Society, Birmingham

The oldest post office worker in St Buryan, 1935

ROYAL MAIL GROUP LTD /BPMA.COM PHOTOGRAPHY: JONTY WILDE (MAIL 05)

Scott's historic hut

Graeme Cruickshank's letter on BBC TV's Secrets of Scott (*Museums Journal June 2011, p20*) raised two points that need clarification.

Firstly Scott's hut at Cape Evans, Ross Island, Antarctica, is not a museum. It is a historic site, visited by approximately 2,000 people each year. The lack of interpretation is intentional, the hut and artefacts within and around it speaking volumes about the privations of the early explorers.

Secondly, the project team has gone to great lengths to control the microclimate within the building by removing the ice from under it, weatherproofing the building, and reducing the humidity and temperature fluctuations within the hut.

The conservation work and the wider Antarctic exploration story it is intending to preserve has been widely disseminated not only with this BBC programme, but also by virtual tours on the trust's website (www.nzhat.org) and the extensive number of visits to the project blog (www.nhm.ac.uk/antarctica-blog) hosted by the Natural History Museum, who will themselves stage a major exhibition on Scott in 2012.

Julian Bickersteth, artefact conservation consultant, Antarctic Heritage Trust of New Zealand

Cuts monitor online

The latest cut our museum is facing includes a relocation to free up saleable assets, ie, the building. The new facility will significantly limit what we are able to do, and as staff will not be based on site, will remove the personal face of the museum, which previously has been one of our strongest assets.

As complete closure would be political suicide for the current council, I can't help but feel the service is tolerated by an authority obsessed with its own vanity, rather than embraced as it should be.

Anonymous MA member

Join the debate:
www.museumsassociation.org/cuts

In the October issue of Museums Journal

- What the creative industries can do fo museums and vice versa. By Geraldine K
- The challenges of displaying and inter transport collections. By Simon Stepher
- Profile of Godfrey Worsdale, the direc of the Baltic Centre for Contemporary A Gateshead
- Reviews of: Riverside Museum, Glasg Holburne Museum, Bath; M Shed, Bristo Gallery, Surrey
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Vox pop

Is the raft of new museum openings sustainable?

Fiona Talbot *head of museums, libraries and archives, Heritage Lottery Fund*

"Yes. Although it might seem so, there has not been a huge increase in new museums. Many are transformations, like the National Museum of Scotland and the Great North Museum, and their visitor numbers are exceeding expectations, which clearly demonstrates demand from the public.

At the Heritage Lottery Fund, we are robust when looking at a museum's business plan. We want to make sure our investment is sound, so we work with applicants throughout the process and we know this rigorous approach results in a more sustainable organisation. Museums are very good at reinventing themselves. We've seen in the past that the sector has responded to tough times and made changes to ensure their long-term sustainability."

Simon Wallis *director of the Hepworth, Wakefield*

"Yes. We have attracted 180,000 visitors in 11 weeks since opening and the positive responses from the public, questionnaires, and on Twitter and Facebook have been overwhelming. The public have a desire for the meaningful and rich experiences galleries and museums offer and are voting with their feet. We're delighted with our visitor figures, the many return visits, and the exceptional length of time people spend in the gallery.

Sustainability depends on exceptional programmes, developing new ways to be commercially successful, and attracting new philanthropists and stakeholders. We are reflecting back in full the huge return on investment supporting a successful gallery or museum provides."

Tim Desmond *chief executive of the Galleries of Justice Museum, Nottingham*

"Yes, but these new museums, and a number of other cultural organisations besides, will only survive if they learn to work collaboratively.

When I devised the concept of Republic of Museums and its offshoot Education Syndicates, the idea was that museums would work together in clusters sharing services and resources and promoting themselves in a joined up way to their users.

A criticism of the public investment by the previous government was that they were only attracted by the shiny and new, without thinking of sustainability. Now when the money has run out, it is imperative that museums show solidarity, by not only sharing resources, but also redirecting audiences across the sector."

Sara Selwood *museum consultant, London*

"We have learnt that atten figures at new museums a refurbishments fall off. Ju how much investment is r to maintain levels of visits regional museums? Even attendances are increasin admission does not mean museums are economicall counter-cyclical. Moreove the dismantling of partne will multiply costs.

New museums need bu plans as radical as their appearances. The recessi ought to be prompting rad transformations, somethi Golden Age never prioriti Not adopting organisatior change will disable museu If the state ends up suppo fewer projects at a higher museums will need to sho they are contributing to s and economic challenges.

Left: St Paul's Cathedral, London, aims to give its visitors value for money by offering interpretation in its Crypt and other spaces. Right: the circular staircase at St Paul's

Keeping the faith

Religious buildings have traditionally had little or no interpretation, but this is changing. *Simon Stephens* finds out why

Visitors to St Paul's who resent paying the £12.50 adult entrance fee might not realise that the London cathedral has charged for admittance since the late 18th century. But whatever the amount people had to pay then, today's visitors get a lot more for their hard-earned cash.

This summer St Paul's completed a £40m restoration programme that coincided with the 300th anniversary of the Christopher Wren-designed cathedral being declared complete by parliament in June 1711. As well as the cleaning and repair of the interior and exterior, the restoration also included the introduction of improved interpretation of the building for visitors. The main elements have been a touchscreen multimedia guide, developed with handheld supplier Antenna Audio. The guide is available in 12 languages, reflecting the cathedral's appeal to overseas visitors – more than 820,000 paid to come through the doors in 2010.

The other major form of interpretation is Oculus: An Eye Into St Paul's, a film created with exhibition designer Ralph Appelbaum Associates that aims to bring the 1,400-year history of the site to life.

© PETER SMITH/ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL (NAVE) | © IMAGEN MAS (EDADES DEL HOMBRE)

Above: St Paul's Cathedral has just finished a £40m restoration project

Interpretation

St Paul's is not alone among UK cathedrals in trying to improve the level of interpretation it offers visitors. Consultant Anne Fletcher, who led the interpretation at St Paul's, has also worked on improving interpretation at Rochester Cathedral and is currently working with York Minster.

"At St Paul's it is an acknowledgement that we have to charge, but we now feel that we give really good value for money and you will leave with a really good understanding of the place and a passion for it," Fletcher says.

Many of the other important UK cathedrals charge an entrance fee for visitors, including York and Canterbury, while others such as Salisbury and Durham encourage donations. These institutions receive no direct funding from government so earned income is important. In 2010 St Paul's received more than £8m from ticket sales, the crypt shop and events.

But it is not all about making money. Many of those in charge of religious buildings are keen to improve people's understanding of their work and providing interpretation is one way of doing this.

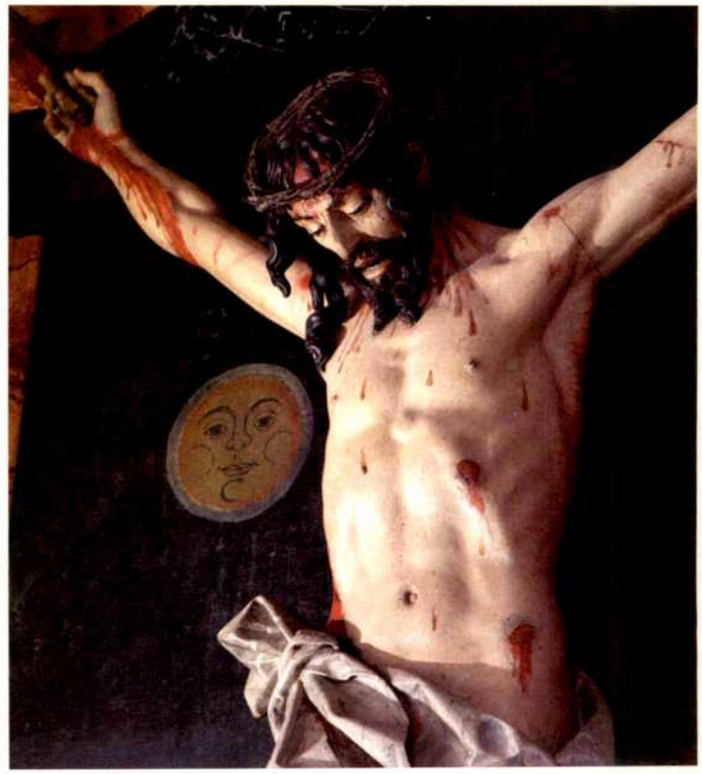
"At the outset of the interpretation project at St Paul's, one of the things that the Dean and Chapter [the governing body] were very worried about was that market research showed that lots of visitors did not realise this was still a church," says Fletcher. "So one of the big aims of the interpretation strategy was to bring this understanding of St Paul's as a working church to visitors, but without alienating people who don't have faith or are of other faiths."

The danger of alienating non-Christians is one of the challenges faced by those interpreting religious buildings of that faith. The solution seems to be not to be too evangelical and to look for commonalties rather than differences.

"Right from the start, the idea at St Paul's was that it should be very subtle," says Fletcher. "What it should do is explain Christianity, how people worship and how this building is used, in an inclusive way so that people who are not Christians are not put off.

"Everybody is struggling with the same issue, which is how do you interpret faith, and they all treat it slightly differently," Fletcher continues. "There is the recognition that if you are a Christian church you are interpreting Christianity, you are not telling a multi-faith story. But you are trying to tell that Christian story in a way that is accessible to all."

For the faithful and the curious alike



Polychrome devotional statues, such as these featured in the church-based Ages of Man exhibition in northern Spain, are an important part of religious culture

Interpretation in churches is often very different on mainland Europe, and reflects specific countries' religious history and traditions.

In Spain, religious objects are often very much part of current religious practice. In the Castilla y León region in the north of the country, the Las Edades del Hombre (The Ages of Man) religious exhibition has been running for 16 years.

It has traditionally taken place in different cathedrals, but this year it has been divided into two and is being hosted by churches in the villages of Medina del Campo and Medina se Rioseco. It runs from May until November.

This year's theme is the Passion and features about 180 works of religious art. They include works that are still paraded through the streets as part of the Holy Week religious processions that take place in the region each Easter.

Some of the objects in Las Edades del Hombre feature particularly graphic representations of Christ, which would be shocking to see in an UK church, although UK museum visitors were given a taste of this at last year's Sacred Made Real exhibition at the National Gallery.

The capital of Castilla y León, Valladollid, features Museo Nacional Colegio de San Gregorio, a museum of religious sculpture and one of Spain's oldest museums.

www.turismocastillayleon.com

An inclusive approach includes looking at Christian practices that have similarities with other religions, such as the ritual use of water. And it means explaining the basic terms that are used in Church of England architecture and religious practice.

"A lot of interpreting faith is about getting back to basics," Fletcher says. "It's a much more secular society now. When medieval churches were built, you'd expect everyone to be able to read the iconography. You can't assume that any more."

Cathedrals often turn to exhibition designers to help them appeal to wider audiences. Event Communications has worked on interpretation at convents, churches and cathedrals, including Canterbury, where there were similar concerns to St Paul's.

Secular and sacred

"There were lots of people who visited Canterbury's great historic building, but the Dean and Chapter were concerned that it was being looked at without any real understanding of the role of the church today," says Event Communications chairwoman Cel Phelan. She believes that cathedrals such as Canterbury provide a rich source of material for interpretation as they are full of important objects and the buildings are artefacts in themselves.

Exhibition design firm Haley Sharpe has worked with a number of religious buildings on interpretation projects, including St Martin in the Fields church in central London and Hereford Cathedral.

The project at Hereford centred on interpreting the medieval heritage of the cathedral and the iconic treasures that are a legacy of that period, such as the Mappa Mundi, a 13th-century map that reveals how scholars interpreted the world in spiritual and geographical terms.

"The exhibition at Hereford formed an important layer within the cathedral's offer, which, together with the cafe and the shop, caters for a wide visitor profile without compromising its central role as an important faith institution," says Haley Sharpe's head of new projects Stephen Richards. "These ▶

additional layers obviously increase dwell time and are important for visitor spend."

There are numerous such projects underway at the moment. Hereford is currently working on the £5m Cathedral Close project, which includes new interpretation and improved access and infrastructure. Durham is fundraising for its £5m Open Treasure project, which will open up spaces for wider public use as well as creating more exhibition areas for displaying a greater number of its Saxon artefacts, medieval manuscripts and other objects. And York Minster is working on York Revealed, a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)-supported programme that will restore and conserve the building and improve interpretation.

Community significance

It's not just the big cathedrals that are making efforts to improve interpretation and provide a better welcome for visitors. Tim Bridges, a museum curator for 20 years, is involved in a number of organisations that care for and support churches, and was appointed as the church buildings support officer for the diocese of Hereford earlier this year. He says that there are a number of factors driving church organisations to move beyond their core religious role.

One reason is that grants to improve buildings are often dependent on providing some form of interpretation for visitors. And as village schools, pubs and post offices close, churches are often the only public buildings left and there is a demand for them to do more to reflect this. Churches are also an important part of the tourism industry and there are various initiatives that use religious buildings as a basis for people to explore areas.

Joanna Booth is the development officer for the North West Multi-Faith Association (NWMFA), which supports faith tourism by helping sacred sites to be open and welcoming.

One of the main aims is to help religious organisations become more sustainable, with churches able to access straightforward advice on attracting visitors and ways to interpret their buildings.

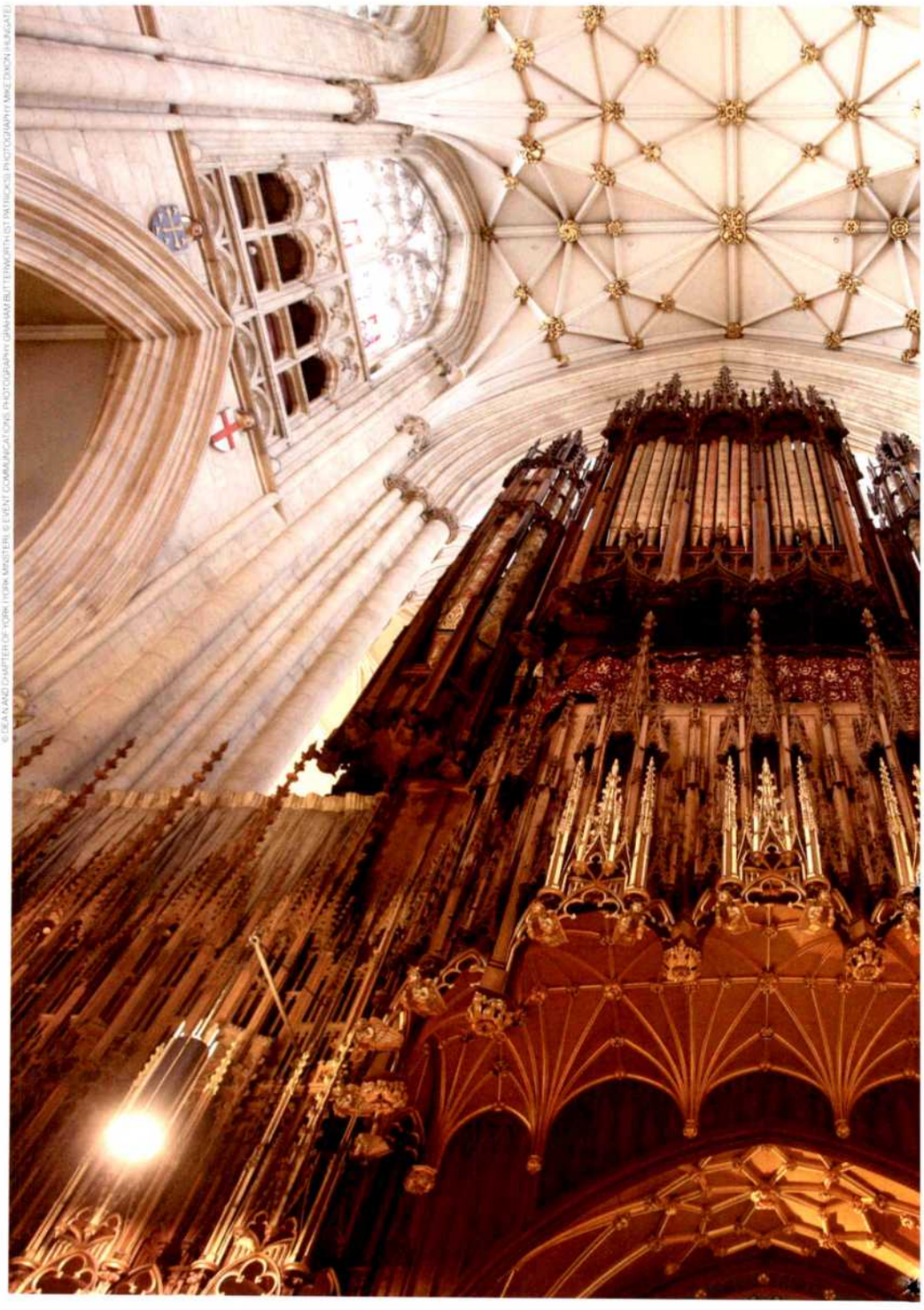
"We want as many faith sites open and welcoming visitors as possible," says Booth, who is one of the regional church development officers funded by English Heritage under its Inspire programme. "It is about bringing visitors in and using that to increase income and make sure a church that has been there for 1,000 years will be there for another 1,000 years."

As well as improving the sustainability of religious organisations, one of the aims of the NWMFA is to promote interfaith harmony.

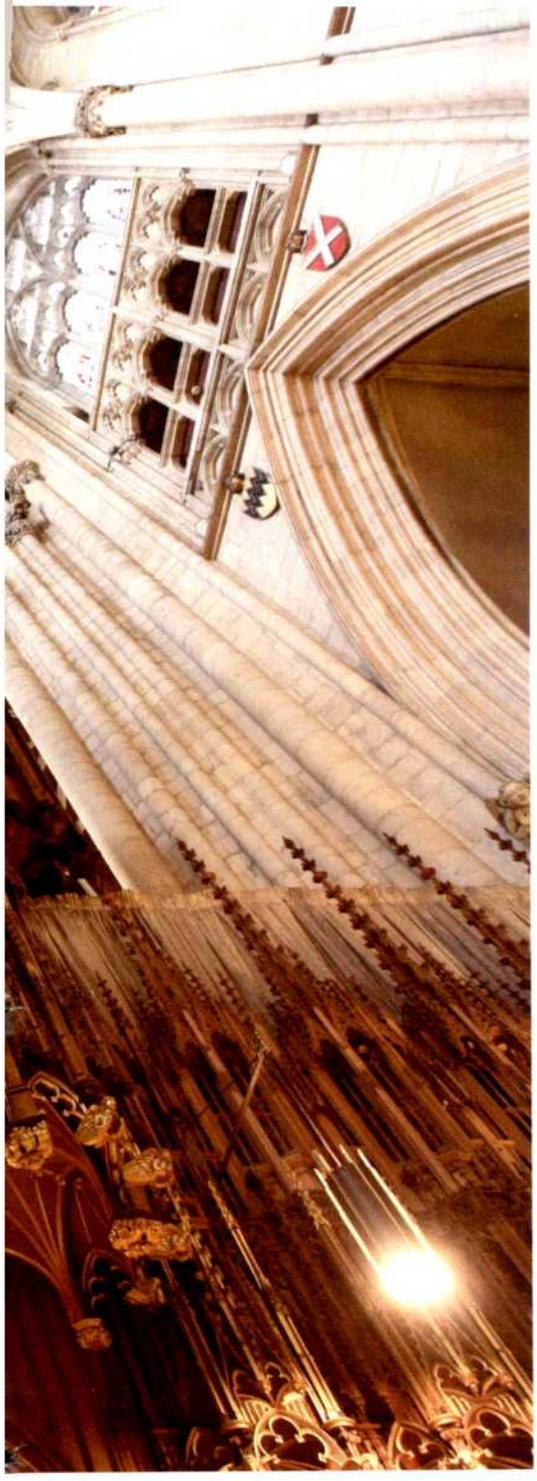
"It is also about community cohesion and increasing understanding," says Booth, who works with mosques and synagogues as well as churches and cathedrals. "It is ignorance that leads to intolerance, fear and distrust, so we want these places to be accessible."

Although bodies such as NWMFA are helping religious buildings to survive, many churches are closing, although the rate is slow-

© DEAN AND CHAPTER OF YORK (YORK MINSTER) © EVENT COMMUNICATIONS. PHOTOGRAPH GRAHAM BUTTERWORTH (ST PATRICK'S) PHOTOGRAPH MIKE DIXON (HUGATE)



Above: York Minster is working on how it presents itself to vistors.
Right: St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, engaged interpretation experts to help it address the needs of its visitors



Renewed purpose

When Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service got rid of its church museum in 2000, one of the options was to turn it into a wine bar.

Kate Weaver, who used to work at the Churches Conservation Trust, was horrified: "I thought the idea of making it a wine bar was absolutely hideous, so I said let's think of something we can do so we can at least keep it like a church."

The solution was to turn St Peter Hungate, a 15th-century church in the centre of Norwich, into an interpretation centre for Norfolk's medieval heritage. Weaver worked with colleagues to secure a lease from Norwich Historic Churches Trust and to fundraise to conserve the building. Hungate Medieval Art opened in 2008 and has a permanent exhibition that looks at stained glass in Norfolk. The aim is also to direct visitors out to see the medieval art hidden in the county's parish churches.

Weaver is keen for redundant churches to have uses that make visitors feel they are still entering a religious building.

"These buildings have been deemed redundant for regular worship, but they are still stunning. It is not like a museum where you are interpreting religious objects – you want to get a sense that you are going into a religious building."

Money from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported Hungate Medieval Art in its first two years of its operation. But in March a £300,000 HLF bid that would have allowed it to expand its work was turned down.

Weaver says the organisation has now reached a crisis point and new funding is desperately needed to secure its future.

www.hungate.org.uk

Above and right: St Peter Hungate, Norwich, offers visitors a stained-glass exhibit and an introduction to Norfolk's churches

ing. A 2010 English Heritage report, Churches and Closure in the Church of England, found that since 1969 there have been 1,795 closures. This represents about 11% of the Anglican building stock.

Some of what are known as redundant churches end up with the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), a non-religious body that is funded by government. The trust now has responsibility for 340 properties, which attract 1.5m visitors a year in total.

The organisation is in the process of appointing a consultant to help it develop an interpretation strategy for its sites. And even though it does not have a religious purpose, the CCT shares some of the issues faced by active churches, such as financing interpretation and maintenance.

New relevance

"We are going to initially need to prioritise as resources are tight, as they are for most government-funded organisations," says CCT deputy director Sarah Robinson. "We have got lots of ideas, but as usual it's a question of finding the funding and resources to develop them."

One the approaches being considered is to focus resources on the 20 CCT churches that already receive visitors. Robinson describes this as a gateway strategy in which those venues will be used as a way to provide information about other local trust churches.

One of the trust's properties, All Souls church in Bolton, is to be turned into a multi-purpose community centre. It has received £3.3m from HLF and there will be an interpretation area dedicated to the building's history.

Projects such as these can provide a fascinating insight into the UK's past. But many visitors need a bit of help in understanding religious buildings and their significance.

"People think churches are dusty, dead and irrelevant, especially if they have never been in one before, and those are the people I'm interested in," says Booth. "Once you start unlocking the secrets of the buildings, then everyone is fascinated. We are a secular society, but I think if churches disappeared it would be very sad."

Reading matters

There is a great public interest in literature, but museums need to find novel approaches to making writers and their work come alive for visitors. By *Deborah Mulhearn*

Left and right: the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Ayrshire, which reopened nine months ago, combines scholarly and creative approaches in its exhibits

© IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM (ONCE UPON A WARTIME)

Whether it's Jane Austen or James Joyce, most of us love to delve into the lives of our favourite authors as well as read their books. The popularity of writers' museums and historic homes would seem to bear this out, although it is a challenge to make printed material such as manuscripts compelling for visitors.

"Writers' museums work well for people who are familiar with the texts, but for people going in cold they get very little from seeing manuscripts in display cases," says Nat Edwards, the director of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Ayrshire. "It's often a mixture of beautiful and important scholarly texts jumbled up with some loosely-related items."

The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum has seen visitor figures soar since it reopened in a £21m purpose-built museum in December 2010. The museum was on the four-strong shortlist for this year's Art Fund Prize and can expect to meet its forecast of 500,000 visitors this year.

But creating the new museum was not straightforward. While Burns is almost a secular saint in Scotland, very few objects that he owned survive.

"In a way this freed us up," says Edwards. "We haven't slavishly reproduced the original interior of the cottage, but rather tried to give a sense of what formed his childhood imagination – his mother's songs and the ghost stories that inspired his poem Tam o'Shanter.

"We wanted to move away from the idea of the birthplace as a place of pilgrimage," Edwards continues. "The spell of the place encompasses the cottage, the landscape, the weather, the culture. It's not a shrine, but a place of inspiration, and that's what we wanted to draw out. We want people to go away thinking about his poetry and language and music, and feel inspired."

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is also on the up following a programme of conservation and improved interpretation at the various properties it manages in Stratford-upon-Avon. It has been helped by the discovery of the controversial Cobbe Shakespeare portrait in 2009, which formed the centrepiece of an exhibition called Shakespeare Found. In 2010 the five Shakespeare Houses & Gardens welcomed 764,000 visitors, up from 686,000 in 2008.

But writers can fall out of fashion too. The number of people visiting Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museums has been falling (from more than 66,000 in 20006 to less than 55,000 in 2009), despite being based in the tourist hotspot of the Lake District.

William Wordsworth lived with his family at Dove Cottage in Grasmere between 1799 and 1808. He wrote his most famous poems there and the cottage retains the spirit of the time, as it features the Wordsworths' furniture and belongings. The manuscripts and early printed poetry books can be seen in the adjacent Wordsworth Museum. This was opened in 1981, though there has been a museum on the site since 1936. But the displays are dated, and the Wordsworth Trust has plans to inject long-overdue investment and revitalise the site.

"It can be a disjointed experience," says Wordsworth Trust director Michael McGregor. "We want to move away from the notion that it's a cottage and a separate museum and make it a more fluid experience. The cottage is limited as to how many people it can hold, but the museum could take a more thematic approach and become relevant to a broader spectrum of visitors. We are competing with other venues in the Lake District where most people come for more active than contemplative experiences. People are on budgets – not just time and money, but energy as well."

McGregor says the trust runs a successful events programme that shines a light on different aspects of the collection, and it has also been nurturing contemporary poetry with readings and residencies. The plan is to help the whole visitor experience catch up with this type of activity.

One of the difficulties of interpreting birthplace museums and homes of writers is that they attract visitors who may be as interested in architecture, gardens and social history as in the famous inhabitant. Some visitors will not be familiar with the work, and will be happy to immerse themselves in the sense of place and history.

The amount of material on display relating to the writer's life and work also differs widely from place to place. Where manuscripts and books can be displayed, the challenge is to engage visitors with the words and text. But manuscripts can be held in archives and libraries remote from the house.

The novelist Elizabeth Gaskell lived at 84 Plymouth Grove in Manchester from 1850 ▶

Above and left: the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon has been improving its interpretation and the display of the recently discovered Cobbe portrait (above) has increased interest

Once upon a wartime: classic war stories for children

This exhibition at the Imperial War Museum (IWM), London, features five children's books that address the impact of war on children's lives: War Horse by Michael Morpurgo; Carrie's War by Nina Bawden; The Silver Sword by Ian Serraillier; The Machine Gunners by Robert Westall; and Little Soldier by Bernard Ashley.

"From each book we took a theme: loyalty; separation; excitement; survival; and identity," explains Sarah Gilbert, the head of exhibitions at IWM. "Deciding how to best formulate the exhibition was a lengthy process. We wanted the broadest appeal, so we chose books that covered different conflicts and time periods. We created roomsets wherever possible, using material from our collections to bring the books, but also the history, to life.

"We wanted an immersive experience, especially for those that haven't read the books, so we filmed children from a theatre school to create a storyboard," Gilbert says. "We used film footage, posters, letters, and photographs. We wanted it to be as sensory as possible so, for example, we had the noise of horses on the frontline for War Horse, and a soundtrack of planes playing above the den created for The Machine Gunners."

The living writers were filmed talking about their inspiration for the books.

"We wanted visitors to appreciate the process of writing and also encourage them to read and write," adds Gilbert. "It had to work on all age levels, and the biggest challenge was to bring it into to the 21st century. It was difficult to find a book that looked at modern war and the impact on children's lives."

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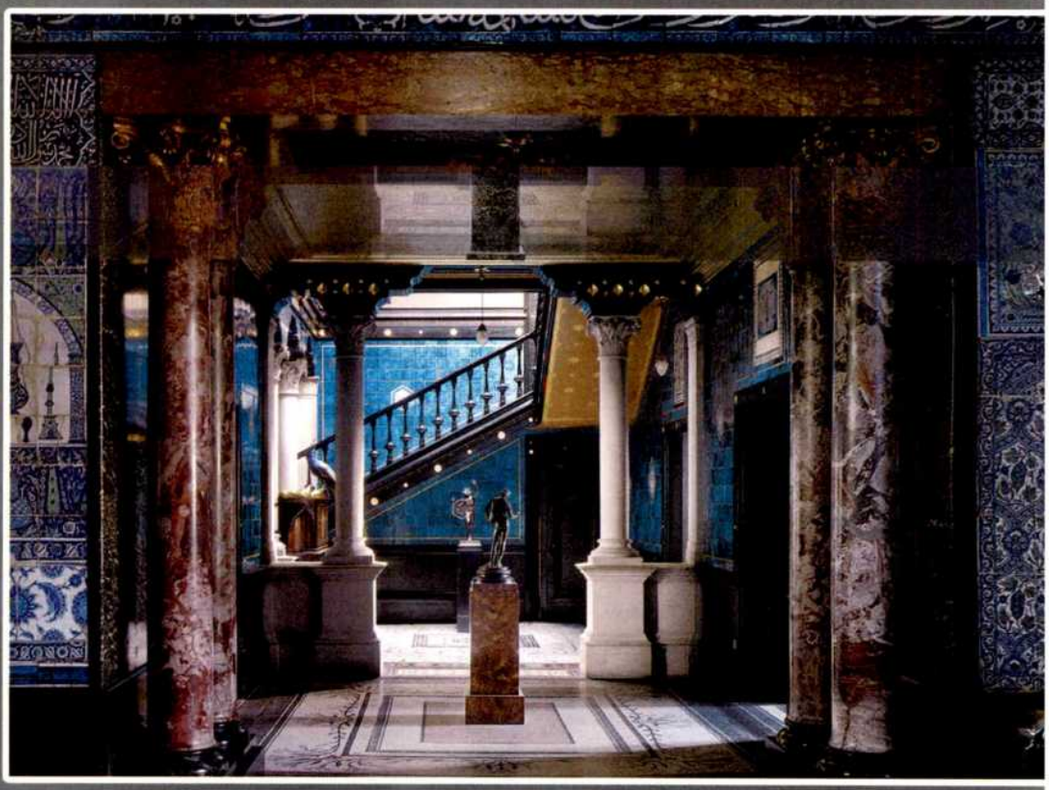

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until her death in 1865. She wrote all but one of her books there; however, the manuscripts are held at the John Rylands Library in Manchester's city centre.

The house is undergoing renovation and only the ground floor is open to the public, but the combination of a well-established events and exhibitions programme run by the Gaskell Society, the Cranford television series on BBC1, and last year's bicentenary of Gaskell's birth, have kept the project in the public eye.

"The Gaskells' house will focus on the books, but it appeals on many levels, not just the literary," says Janet Allan, chairwoman of Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, which owns the building. "It's one of the few women writers' houses open to the public.

"The Gaskells were Unitarians and fully involved with the religious, educational and social issues of their day – issues which still resonate in this part of Manchester," Allan continues. "It will also make a massive difference to the local community. It changes people's perception of an area if you renovate and use a historic building, and it can spearhead further regeneration. It's also a beautiful house in its own right."

Contemporary writers have a place in museums, too, argues Bill Longshaw, a social history curator at National Museums Liverpool (NML) who worked on the writers' gallery at the £72m Museum of Liverpool, which opened in July. Writing Liverpool is one element of the Wondrous Place gallery, which looks at Liverpool's creative and cultural life.

"The social turbulence of the 20th century and the writing that came out of that fits in with the contemporary theme of Liverpool as a creative city," says Longshaw.

The content is drawn from television drama, performance poetry, scriptwriting and theatre, though displays overlap with the other elements of the Wondrous Place gallery, particularly music. For example there is a poetry jukebox that offers poems from the 1960s Mersey Sound poets, but also contemporary Liverpool poetry.

"You can't separate writing from music and performance in a city with such a strong oral tradition," says Longshaw. Contemporary writers, including Jimmy McGovern, Alan Bleasdale and Willy Russell, talk about their influences and the impact of their work, not ducking sensitive subjects such as stereotyping. "We are looking at the achievements, but within the context of the city, asking why it has been so successful and its legacies – both good and bad," says Longshaw. "It's an overview but also it is intended to convey that writing in Liverpool is alive and well."

Children's books would seem to be easier to display because they have colour, striking illustrations and familiar characters. However, exhibitions of children's books have to appeal to all ages, points out Gill Rennie, the senior exhibitions curator at Seven Stories in Newcastle upon Tyne, as many of the visitors are adults.

Seven Stories works with living authors and illustrators to produce exhibitions and stage workshops and other events.

"We take our lead from how involved they want to be and what original material is available," says Rennie. "With one person and their work – as with the current exhibition, Through the Magic Mirror, the World of Anthony Browne – we are working within given boundaries. We always look at the process, how somebody writes or illustrates, always using it as a stepping stone to children's creativity.

"We draw on our collections as much as possible and we acquire material with a view to how it would be exhibited," Rennie continues. "The aim is to engage children with original material, and to nurture early readers into becoming adult readers but also gallery-goers."

A lifesize cut-out of Browne is positioned at the start of the exhibition, with his back to visitors but with his face visible through a mirror.

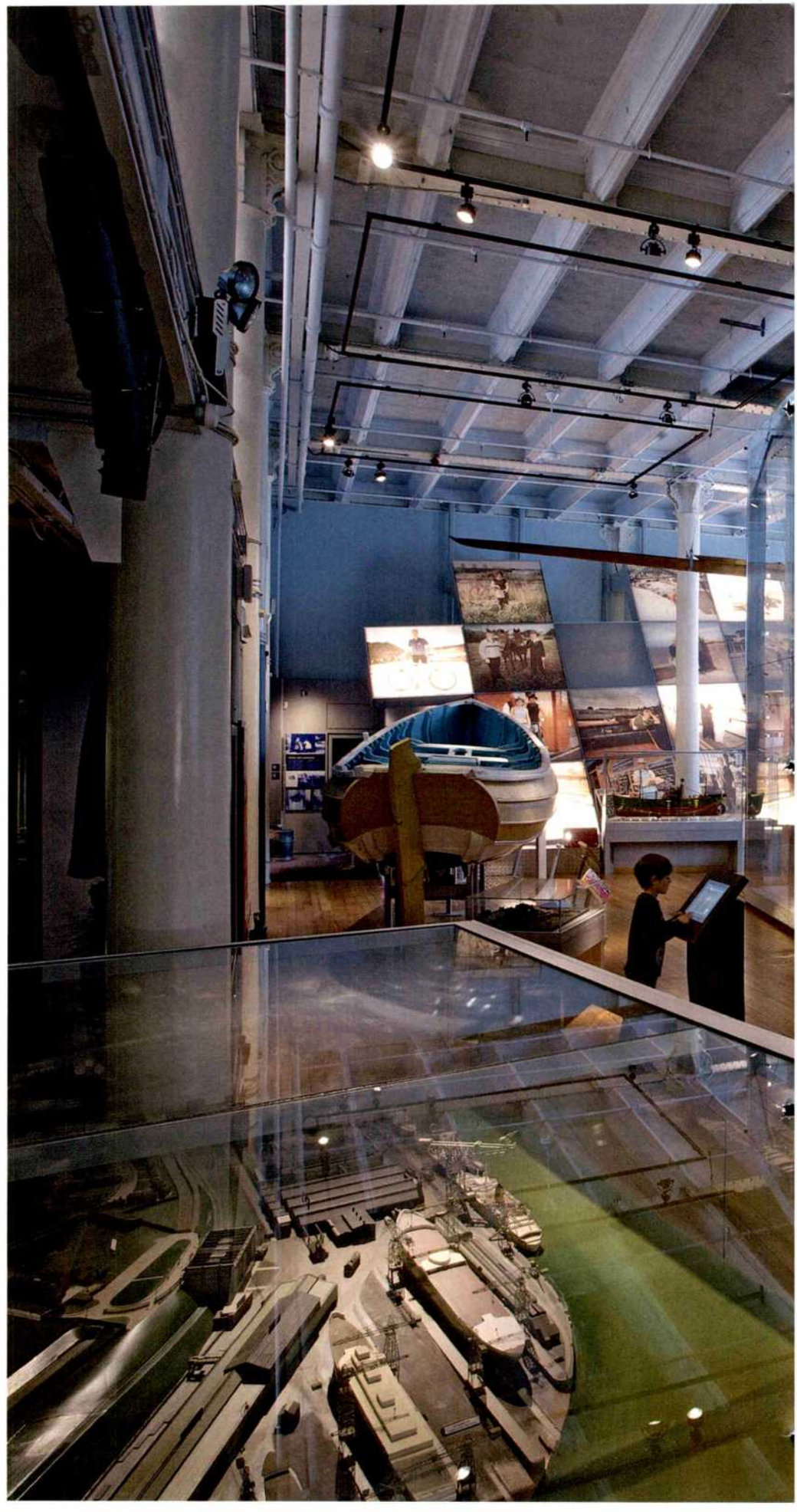
"I liked this, it gave a presence and it seemed to follow you around. It gives the stories a life beyond the text," says the author, who finished a two-year stint as children's laureate in June. "When I saw the projections I was a little concerned that there was too much going on. My pictures are fairly quiet and I worried that they would be in competition with the busy spaces of the exhibition, which has roomsets and walls covered in items and illustrations. But when I saw the finished displays I thought it worked well. It's intimate enough to engage and excite. I like that it's messy, like a life is."

Deborah Mulhearn is a freelance journalist.
The Museum of Liverpool is reviewed on p42

Above: writer Anthony Browne at Seven Stories in Newcastle upon Time.
Left: Dove Cottage, part of the Wordsworth Trust, is planning to invest in its displays

Northern spirit

Iain Watson grew up in the north east and is now in charge of 12 museums across Tyne & Wear. *Simon Stephens* meets him. Photographs by *Phil Sayer*



There must be something appealing about being the director of Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM), as Iain Watson's two most recent predecessors both spent a fair amount of time in their jobs.

Watson took over as director in November last year, replacing Alec Coles, who led TWAM for eight years before being lured to the sunshine of Australia and the directorship of the Western Australian Museum in Perth. Before Coles, museums in Tyne & Wear were led by David Fleming, now the director of National Museums Liverpool, who spent 11 years in the top role.

In an interview with Museums Journal in 2003, Coles paid tribute to Fleming: "It was his vision of what the service could become which turned the place around from a political laughing stock to a well-respected, high-achieving local service."

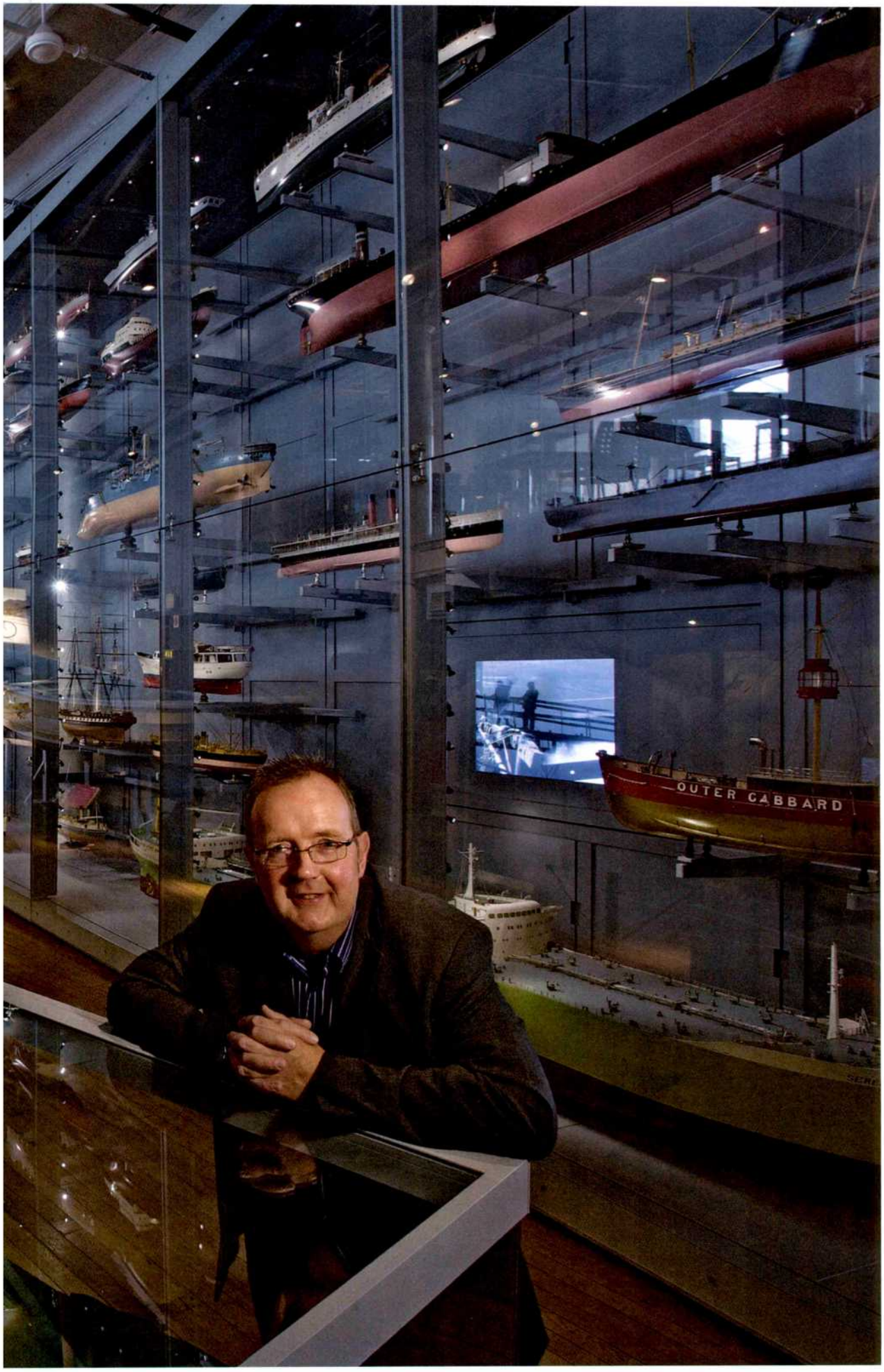
Coles said the challenge for him was "to keep moving forward" and his most obvious achievements were the opening of the £26m Great North Museum in 2009 and the merging of Tyne & Wear Museums with the archives service in the same year.

When Coles became director in 2002 he was looking forward to the museum service becoming a pathfinder hub in the Renaissance in the Regions scheme and was also waiting to hear if the city's bid to become the European Capital of Culture in 2008 would be a success – it wasn't, and, ironically, it was Fleming who won that title in Liverpool.

So what kind of museum service has Watson inherited and what are the main challenges that he faces?

Like museum and gallery directors all over the UK, his main concern has been getting his budgets sorted out in the face government funding cuts.

"From fairly prudent management we have made the savings we need to make effectively and efficiently, and in partnership with our local authority partners," Watson says. ▶



Iain Watson at a glance

Iain Watson was appointed director of Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM) in November 2010. He was acting director from March 2010 after Alec Coles left to become the director of the Western Australian Museum in Perth.

Watson started his museum career at Tyne & Wear Museums before moving to Durham County Council to oversee archaeology and local history across libraries and museums. He returned to Tyne & Wear Museums in 2001 as manager of the Hancock Museum.

He has been a member of TWAM's senior management team since 2001.

Watson is a director of Audio Visual Arts North East, a board member of the Tyne & Wear Area Tourism Partnership and a lay member of Newcastle University's Ethics Committee. He is also the Museums Association's representative in the north east.

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The budget has now been set and the corporate plan is in place for this year and next. The aim now will be to keep the finances on track and find new sources of funding to support TWAM's work.

"We have to realise that museums like our own have to diversify some of our funding," Watson says. "It is not to change what we do, but we need to generate income to ensure that we continue to deliver our mission to make a difference in people's lives."

But it's not all about trimming budgets and driving down costs, as Watson says he is looking forward to working on projects such as Paul Hamlyn Foundation-funded scheme to encourage community engagement. There are also still aspirations to develop capital projects.

The two most advanced schemes are for the Hatton Gallery and the Laing Art Gallery, which are both in the centre of Newcastle. The Hatton revamp will be smaller in scale, but completed sooner, while a scheme to extend and enhance the Laing will be in the medium to long-term. Architects Terry Farrell and Partners have already completed a pre-feasibility study for the Laing.

The great north

Watson has experience of capital projects, having worked on the lottery application to secure funding for the Great North Museum. Seven months of hard work culminated in a desperate dash to get the bid in on time, with Watson having to overcome cancelled trains on the east coast mainline and a tube strike in London. But he reached the Heritage Lottery Fund's office in London with all the information intact and £9m was in the bag.

It was during this period that Watson got the newly created post of assistant director, which effectively made him Coles's deputy (the assistant director's post has not been filled as a cost-saving measure). By this time he had already gained a wide range of experience at a variety of museums.

"I have been incredibly lucky in my career, in that I have managed art galleries, regimental museums, natural history museums, social history museums, transport museums and so on. There have not been many types of museums and galleries or local history services that I haven't actually managed and for some people that might not be something you choose to do because you might want to have a particular specialism and stay with it. But I've enjoyed that huge diversity."

Being a generalist is something that has appealed to Watson from early on: "I was somebody who could never make up their mind whether they wanted to be on the arts side or the science side and I always liked both and wanted to do both. There comes a certain point in your life where you can't really do both anymore, but I kept it going for as long as I possibly could."

Watson decided to do degree in archaeological science, then a master's in methods of archaeology, which he says was quite hard science. He then did some research in Oxford before getting a job in Durham doing analysis of pottery samples.

"I was all set for a career as a researcher until I decided I was not very good at it and didn't really like it. I was interested by it, but it was not what made me want to get up in the morning. I recognised what actually interested me was the people side of the whole business."

So Watson changed track and trained to be a secondary school English teacher, which provided a route to a job at Tyne & Wear Museums. He started out at the Wallsend Heritage Centre, the precursor to what is now Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths and Museum and part of the 12-strong family of TWAM venues.

Starting out at a small museum proved a great way to learn the ropes, as it has for so many others in the sector.

"I had the most fantastic job as the assistant manager. It was a bit of everything, because there were two of us on the staff. You physically built the exhibitions with a saw and a hammer, showed school groups round, planned exhibitions, wrote you own press releases. You literally did everything, but it was a fantastic way to learn a lot of different aspects so I was very, very lucky to do that."

Watson spent six years at Tyne & Wear Museums, including a stint as the keeper of science collections, before moving to Durham County Council for a job looking after archaeology and local history across libraries and museums. This involved activities such as organising local history events in mining villages across Durham and Watson describes it as "great fun, a lovely job".

He then returned to Tyne & Wear Museums in 2001 as manager of the Hancock Museum.

Like Coles before him, Watson is keen to use the strong identity and cohesiveness of

Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums covers 12 museums across five local authorities, including the Discovery museum in Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums at a glance

Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums employs about 335 people and has an annual turnover of over £17m.

It manages 12 museums across five local authorities: Newcastle (which acts as lead authority and legal body), Sunderland, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, and Gateshead. It also receives funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

TWAM is supported by the Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums Development Trust, which was established in December 2010 to raise funds from individual donors, trusts and foundations.

the north east to benefit TWAM. He says even before the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council was abolished and its responsibilities were taken over by Arts Council England, he had a strong relationship with the head of the region's arts council, which he will now be able to build on as the new relationship takes shape.

Family values

"They say everybody in the north east is related, so we have always had a close relationship with arts council. As soon as we started to get an idea of what was happening I picked the phone up to our regional director and said we need to talk about this. We meet once a month anyway."

And forums such as the Newcastle and Gateshead Cultural Partnership allow him to expand TWAM's work beyond the confines of museums and archives.

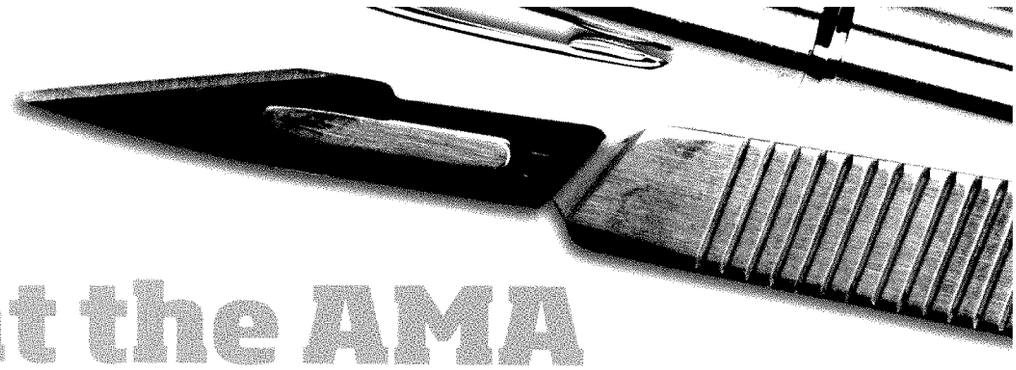
"We do try to be very, very broad and engage in things that are outside what museums normally do," he says. "I don't see the borders between arts and culture, we are all part of the same business."

As well as the benefits of working in the north east, Watson also has a personal attachment to the region, having grown up there.

"It's a great place to live and work. You are very connected and there is great cultural scene and fantastic heritage. You have that mix of big enough conurbations to have an impact and a sense of place but also lovely countryside and the coast on your doorstep."

With a job he enjoys, and new challenges on the horizon, in a region that he grew up in and obviously has great affection for, it looks likely that Watson will stick around as Tyne & Wear's director, even if he does hear tales from Coles about the fantastic weather in Western Australia.

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION



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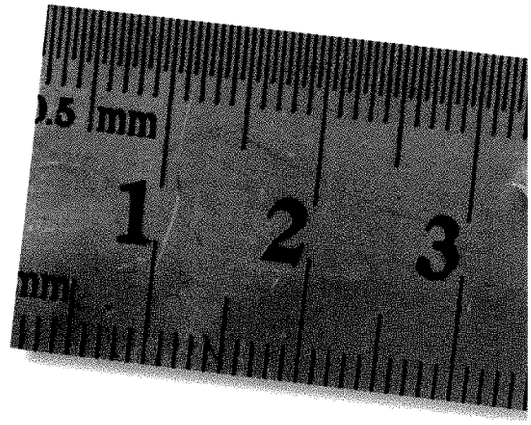

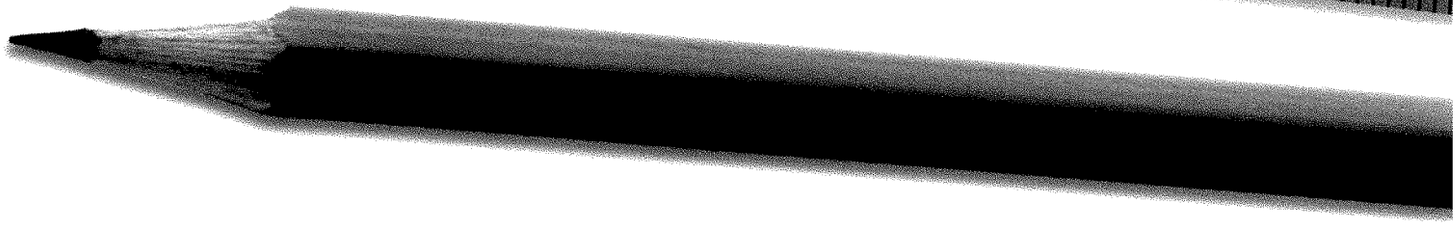

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The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Louise Gray hears what links London, Stratford-upon-Avon and Washington, DC, to Craven Museum and Art Gallery

Where Inside the Victorian town hall building in Skipton, north Yorkshire. The gallery is on the ground floor and the museum is upstairs.

What "The museum is like a lot of other local ones – an eclectic mix of archaeology, art, social history and costume," says the museum's acting curator Amy Ball. She is also the assistant curator of archaeology.

Opened 1930s. It moved to the town hall in 1973.

Collection The museum owns many artefacts relating to local heritage and the area's ancient past, taking in neolithic tools, Roman remains and an iron age/Roman weapon known as the Flasby sword. Its Clement Roebuck art collection features 145 pieces, including one painting that the museum thought might be a Rembrandt. "It wasn't," says Ball. "It was actually quite a relief." In 2003, the museum found that it had a Shakespeare First Folio. It was put in a safe until grants and bequests allowed the museum to put it on permanent display earlier this year.

Help at hand One manager, two curators and five part-time front-of-house staff. "A core group of 20 volunteers and 40 Friends are invaluable," says Ball.

Budget The museum is run by Craven District Council. Both Ball and the social history curator are externally funded, by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Heritage Lottery Fund respectively. Their contracts end in January 2012.

Visitors 63,000 in 2010. Admission to the museum is free.

Highlights "The First Folio is our star exhibit," says Ball. "But I would also choose the whole Roebuck collection and our 1850s Britannia printing press. Our local paper, the Craven Herald & Pioneer, was printed on it."

Sticky moment "Finding out that our Shakespeare was a first folio," says Ball. "The volume lived on the main bookcase in the curators' office until expert Anthony James West visited and identified it as a First. It is one of only four on permanent display in the world; the other locations are London, Stratford-upon-Avon and Washington, DC. The security around it is like Fort Knox."

Survival tip "Widen what you offer in order to cater for as many visitors as possible," Ball says.

Future plans "There are plans to revitalise the town hall as a cultural hub," says Ball. "If all goes ahead, the museum will move to the ground floor and be more accessible."

www.cravenmuseum.org

Above: Craven Museum and Art Gallery occupies two floors in the town hall.
Above right: the museum's First Folio of Shakespeare is one of only four on permanent display in the world.
Right: Skipton's local paper was first printed on this 19th-century press

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The Hepworth Wakefield, p46

Reviews

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Memoranda, Crafts Study Centre, Farnham, p54

Museum of Liverpool, p42

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Museum of Liverpool

It's been worth the long wait for what feels like a genuine people's history museum on the Liverpool waterfront, says *Oliver Green*

When Finn O'Hare put himself forward for the job of opening the Museum of Liverpool he was only five years old but very excited about the new building. O'Hare, who is now six, wrote a letter to the director of National Museums Liverpool saying: "It'll be great. I'm good at opening things." A very Lennonish bit of chutzpah, but David Fleming astutely agreed to it rather than asking a more obvious Liverpool luminary such as Paul McCartney to do the honours.

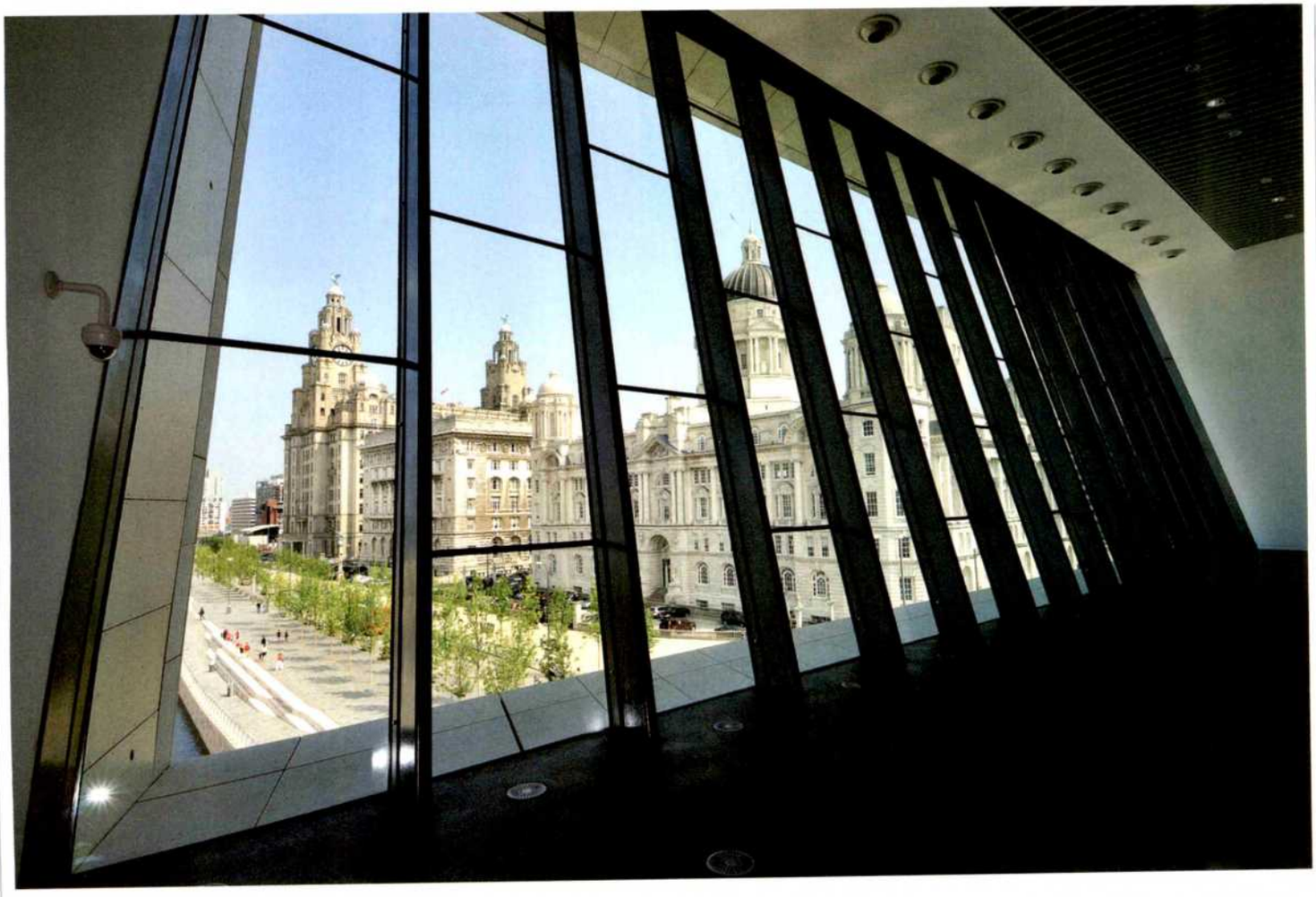
More than 13,000 people visited the Museum of Liverpool on the first day, and it was very busy when I visited a few days later. I don't think I have ever seen so many people of all ages enjoying themselves so much in a museum.

The Museum of Liverpool has the feel of a genuine people's museum, perhaps more so than any other city history museum. More than 10,000 people were consulted on the content creation, specifically through the Our City, Our Stories programme, which has enabled residents to present their interpretation of the museum's themes through displays co-produced with Museum of Liverpool curators.

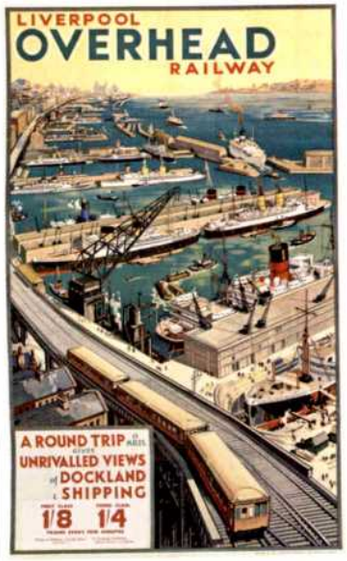
Museum director Janet Dugdale and her colleagues have been working on this for nearly ten years. It has been a long haul, and not without numerous problems, crises and delays on the way, but the result is a great credit to everyone involved.

Interestingly, Dugdale attributes much of the project's success to the creative team's determination to hold on to, and deliver, the original masterplan developed in 2004. Consultants BRC Imagination Arts, whose work on the project finished about four years ago, insisted that the museum triumvirate of Fleming, Dugdale and Sharon Granville, the project director, literally signed on the line to commit themselves to it once the vision had been agreed. This was evidently a powerful motivator.

The museum's location on the Liverpool Pierhead is in many ways ideal, but a position in the middle of a World Heritage Site was always going to be



Left and above: the new £72m Museum of Liverpool has shed its controversial origins to become a building that is practical, modern and airy.
Below: viewing the city has long been a Liverpool pastime



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challenging. It now sits on the waterfront between the "three graces" of the Liver, Cunard and Mersey Harbour Board buildings on one side and the historic Albert Dock complex on the other. All of these are listed structures and the Albert Dock already houses the Maritime and International Slavery Museums as well as Tate Liverpool, all three in restored Victorian warehouse blocks. The former Museum of Liverpool Life had also been located in a smaller former dock building nearby since 1993, but was barely fit for purpose as it could not be expanded to display any larger objects of the city's history in the growing collections. This led to NML's decision to create a new museum about the city on a vacant site nearby.

The new building has had a turbulent gestation. The museum was originally to be incorporated in the city's "fourth grace" project to regenerate the pierhead area. Architect Will Alsop won an open competition with his controversial "cloud" building, but the whole scheme was abandoned in 2004 before any work had started.

A new project led by NML was then established and the contract for a standalone museum building was awarded to Danish practice 3XN. They are credited as creative architects for the building, as it had to be completed by AEW of Manchester, which took over as project architects in 2007. The eventual £72m cost of this major scheme has come from multiple sources, including the now defunct Northwest Regional Development Agency.

The saga has seen further controversy since the opening with the first review of the museum in the national press. This was an ill-informed article by the Observer's architecture correspondent, Rowan Moore, which in turn prompted heated debate on the paper's website.

A lot of people have expressed strong opinions for and against the building. This is partly because of its sensitive position, though many of the negative comments seem to be the familiar rants about planners, architects and even Liverpool City Council (who had nothing to do with it).

These are clearly shark-infested waters, but I'll take my chances and dive in. I think the new museum looks great. It works well inside and out, and is a beautiful modern building that is practical and functional.

It is quite different in appearance to the Royal Liver building and its eclectic neighbours, but how could it not be? The Liver itself must have seemed an extraordinary alien structure when it rose up a century ago as Britain's first reinforced concrete skyscraper and the tallest building in Europe at the time.

While the Museum of Liverpool is a complete stylistic contrast to the existing pierhead buildings, the new ferry terminal alongside is a sort of mini-me copy of the museum, although not by the same architects. It fits in well, unlike the chunky black glass office and apartment complex on the other side of the museum.

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Museum Practice online

published on the 15th monthly at www.museumsassociation.org/mp

Coming up in the next online issues of MP:

August: Retail

Simon Stephens explores how museums can raise income through their shops and websites. Articles include retail design on a budget, e-commerce and partnership working. Retail consultant Chris Walton offers her advice on what makes a good museum shop. There are also case studies from a number of museums and the chance for museums to submit their own case studies.

September: Visually-impaired visitors

Rebecca Atkinson looks at how museums can engage with visually-impaired visitors. This issue of Museum Practice explores some of the barriers to engagement and offers practical guidance on how museums and galleries can become more inclusive. Case studies include audio descriptive tours, touch tours, object handling and the use of new technology.

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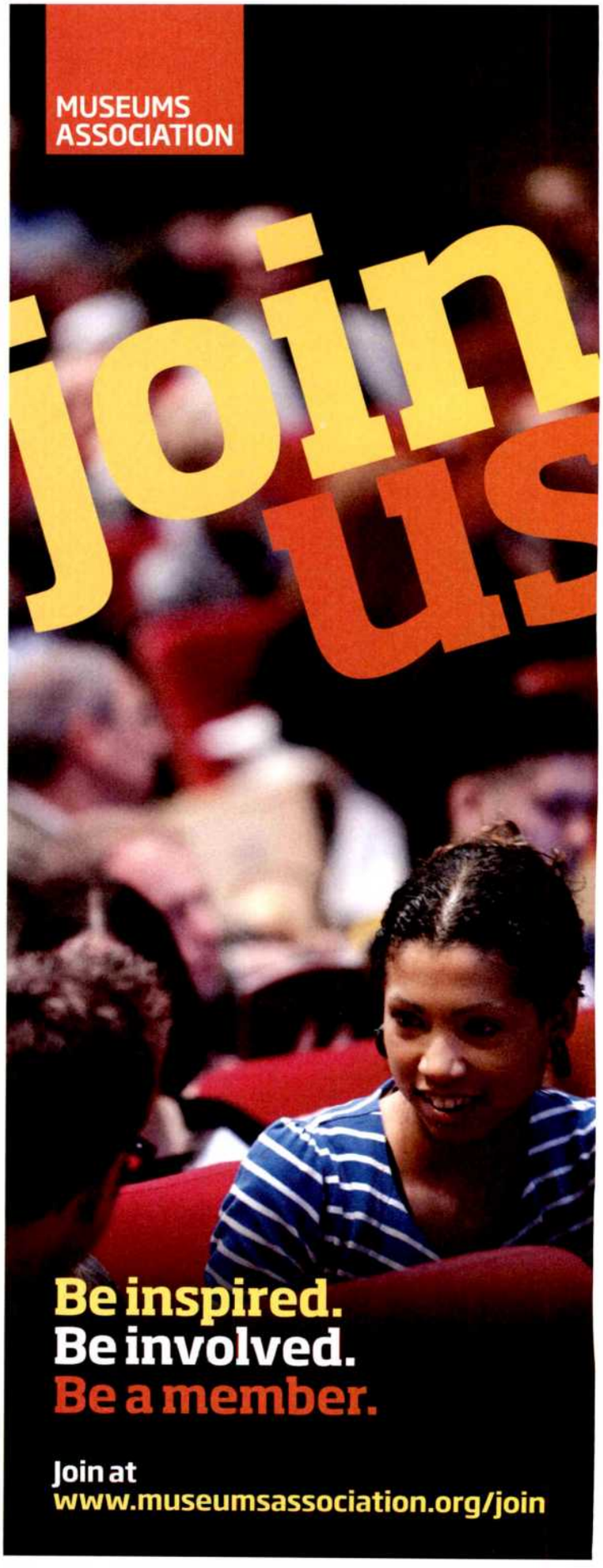

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Above: the architectural model for Edwin Lutyens' cathedral for Liverpool – only the crypt was ever built – is shown in the Cathedral of Dreams exhibition. Above: a re-creation of a typical tenement building or court in the People's Republic gallery

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Project data

Cost £72m
Main funders Northwest Regional Development Agency; European Regional Development Fund; Heritage Lottery Fund; Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Creative architects 3XN
Architects AEW
Main contractor Pihl Galliford Try
M&E and structural engineer Buro Happold
Visitor experience masterplan BRC Imagination Arts
Exhibition project manager Robert Batchelor/EPL
Exhibition design Redman Design (Liverpool Overhead Railway gallery, History Detectives, the Great Port gallery, the People's Republic gallery) Haley Sharpe (Little Liverpool Global City, Wondrous Place, Atrium, flexible exhibition system design)
Display cases Click Netherfield
Exhibition system Click Netherfield/Protean
Wayfinding and signage Benson Signs
AV software & multimedia 55 Degrees (Wondrous Place), Centre Screen Productions (the People's Republic), Global City, Atrium, Football Show)
Interactives Paragon Creative
Lighting consultant Sutton Vane Associates

Regeneration

Sixty years ago the pierhead was a bustling transport hub with multiple pier ferry access, a triple-loop tram terminus and a station on the "dockers' umbrella", Liverpool's famous overhead railway. Most of these striking features were lost in the 1950s. So a part of the city that has been bleak and depressing for years has now been revitalised. The reconstructed canal and promenade alongside the museum has become an inviting leisure area and is already providing a dramatic backdrop for open-air concerts, festivals, light shows and other activities.

The design of the museum building has achieved one of the key objectives of the creative team, which was to make the city panorama outside a visual extension of the gallery displays. This is a complete reversal of the traditional black-box museum design where there is controlled inside lighting only, and rarely any viewing windows in a gallery space. The main reason for the darkened box is to limit light levels on sensitive museum collections, but I am assured that special precautions were taken to ensure a suitable level of collections care.

The views out in every direction are stunning and offer a new dimension that is largely lacking in every city history museum I can think of. This is particularly effective with this location, since the port and access to the wider world is the key to the city's entire history.

All the main display galleries are quite large, uninterrupted spaces based on an underfloor grid of IT and electrics, which allows multimedia, sound and lighting to be delivered anywhere. The main exhibition designers have worked with their showcase supplier to develop a high-spec but completely demountable display system. This is used throughout the museum, although almost every display unit looks different, individually designed and bespoke.

All this has come with a premium price-tag, but it does mean that nearly all the "permanent" displays can be changed easily and cheaply.

Prevailing myths

The museum displays are not presented as a chronological run through Liverpool's history or as a series of urban history themes. Liverpool is a city of endless stories, told in a unique accent with characteristic scouse wit.

Excellent use of multimedia linked to object-rich displays has created some fascinating and high-quality content, though it does not add up to the biography of the city that the museum team was aiming for. It is more a series of individually expressed stories and impressions where the overall thread can be lost.

There is a sense that, in its interpretive style, the museum effectively colludes with some of the legends about Liverpool rather than challenging them. An obvious example is the so-called Merseybeat phenomenon. I would not argue with the talent of the Beatles and their worldwide influence on popular music, but the fact is that none of the other major British beat groups of the 1960s that followed in their wake came from Liverpool. Yet the idea that Liverpool became the new centre of popular music, with Merseyside a unique pool of talent, is still sustained, a myth created by marketing and now embedded in popular culture.

Nevertheless, there is something inexplicable about Liverpool. It has long had, and continues to project, an image and influence that is far bigger than the city itself. The range of creative talent it has produced is amazing, but it has never been a huge city and its population has fallen substantially since the second world war. Shanghai, its current twin city and the subject of one of the museum's displays about Liverpool's worldwide links, is more than 50 times its size. Liverpool still holds its own loudly and effectively, but the explanation for this, other than something in the Mersey, remains elusive.

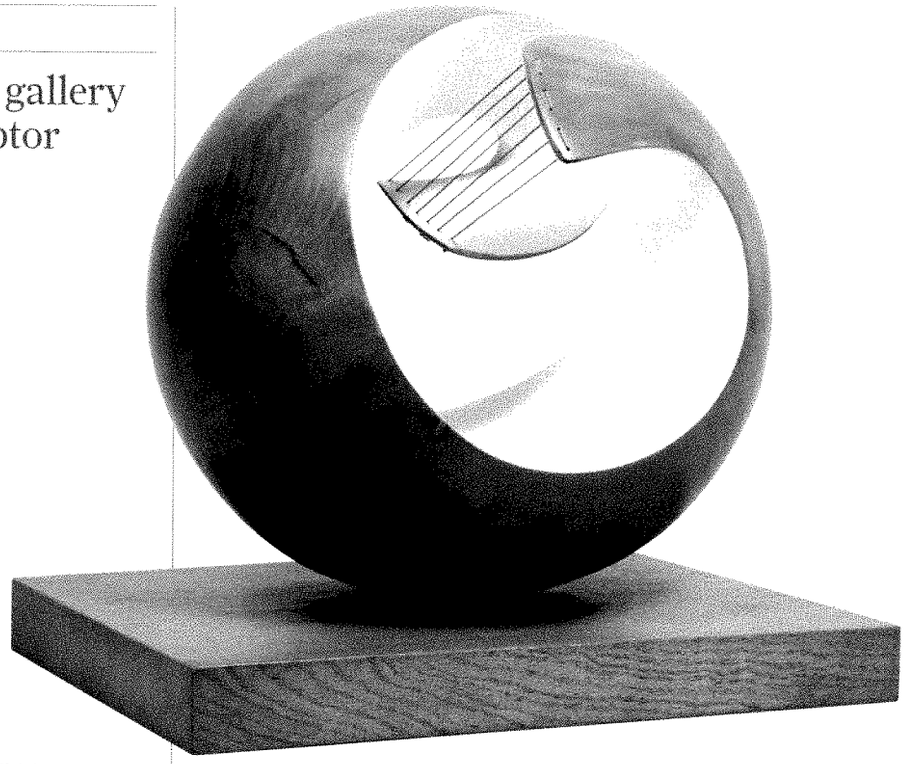
When I was about Finn O'Hare's age I knew nothing about Liverpool except that all my Dinky Toys came from the mysterious Meccano factory in Binns Road. In my mind this was something magical. I now know that it was badly managed, closed down and demolished 40-odd years ago, and that about 1,000 Liverpool women lost their jobs.

Billy Fury may not have been thinking of his hometown when he recorded one of his big hits in 1960, but the song title used by the Museum of Liverpool to name one of the main galleries is a brilliant choice. A Wondrous Place indeed, and I'll be back to see the final new galleries when they open at the end of the year.

Oliver Green is the research fellow at the London Transport Museum

The Hepworth Wakefield

Stephen Feeke is uplifted by a new gallery in Yorkshire devoted to the sculptor Barbara Hepworth



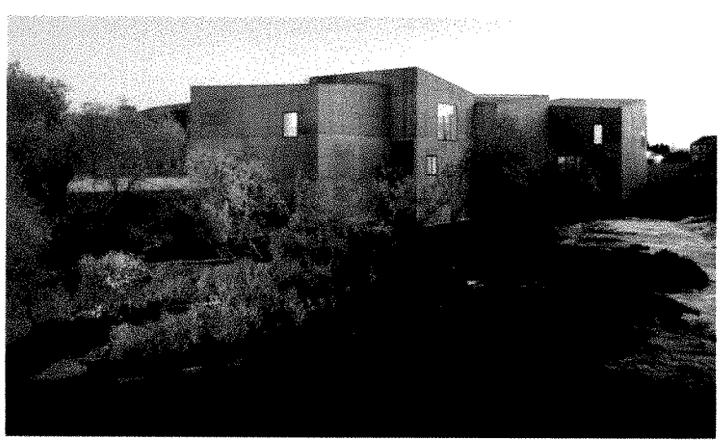
Above: Pelagos, by Barbara Hepworth, on loan from Tate.
Right: Hepworth at work on Single Form (Memorial).
Below: the design of the Hepworth Wakefield echoes the sculptor's geometric abstraction

There is a sense that the opening of the Hepworth Wakefield is a homecoming that has been a rather long time coming. Barbara Hepworth was born in Wakefield in 1903 but left when she was 18 years old. Shortly after, Wakefield opened its first gallery and museum and started collecting work by Hepworth, who was to become one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century.

Hepworth died in 1975 and the new building dedicated to her work has been well worth the wait. The city can now boast the largest purpose-built gallery to have opened in Britain for 50 years, in which it can display its collection and the Hepworth Family Gift. As well as providing an opportunity to focus on Hepworth's sculpture, the gallery will also run programme of contemporary exhibitions, which has begun with a solo show by Eva Rothschild.

The Hepworth Wakefield is a bold and impressive design of international significance by David Chipperfield Architects. While it is sympathetic to its location and particularly to the historic warehouses nearby, its shape, scale, space, texture and weight reflects Hepworth's own sculpture.

The building comprises ten geometric blocks huddled closely together. Each one of these blocks is a different size, shape and height to its neighbour and each one has an irregular sloping roof. The result is surprisingly playful, and yet the sheer scale coupled with the colour of the pigmented concrete facade also creates a sense of grandeur and gravity.



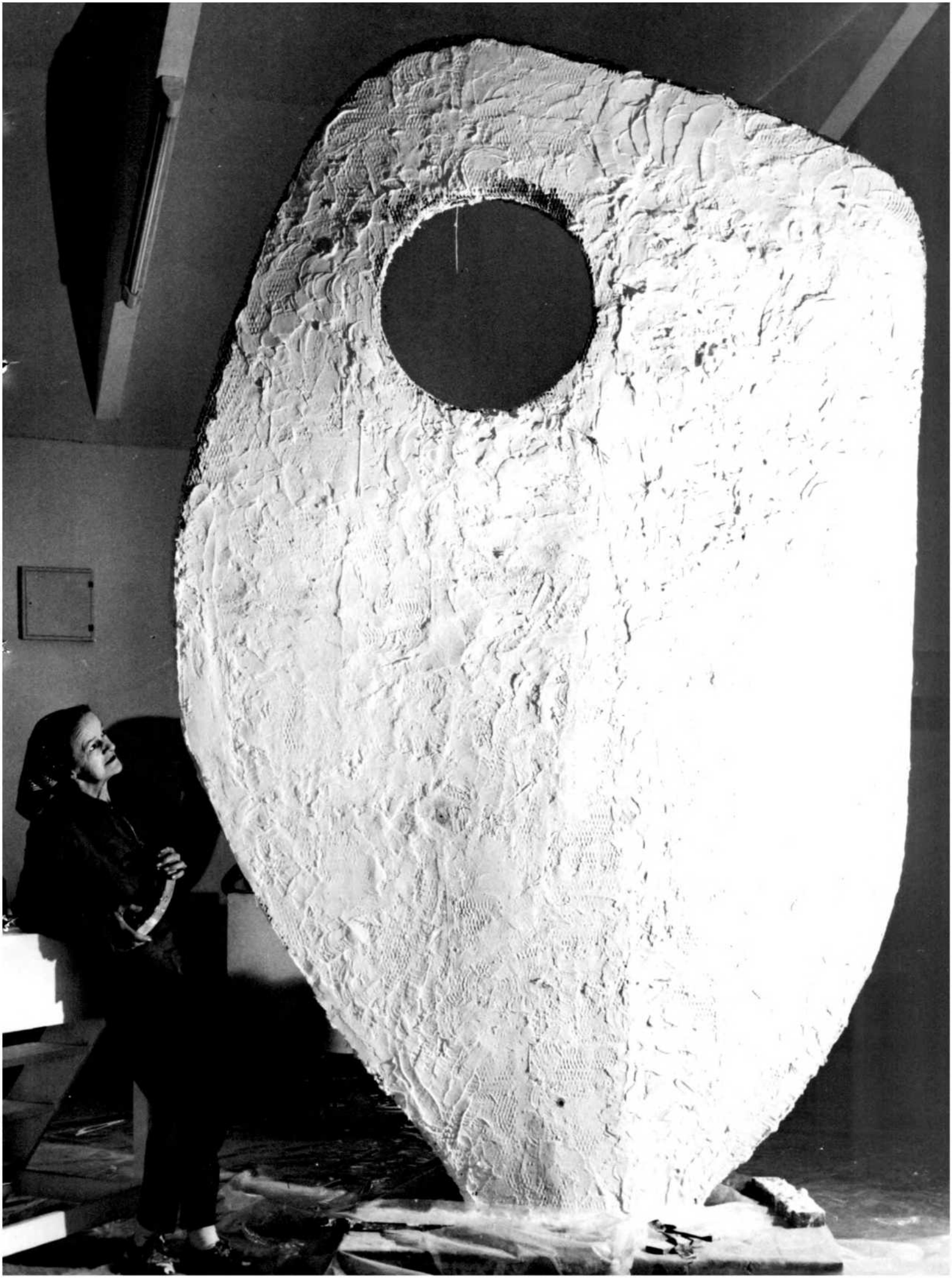
Hepworth's early carvings come readily to mind as does the later bronze Conversation with Magic Stones and the polished bronze Six Forms on a Circle. The latter is inside the galley, while the first sculptures seen outdoors are the Parent I, Parent II and Young Girl from Hepworth's Family of Man - given to Wakefield by the Hepworth Estate in 1993 - a reminder that the Hepworth Wakefield is very much a familial affair, since the recent gift from the artist's estate was a galvanising force behind the initiative for a new gallery. Just beyond the gallery is a jaunty play area offering a different kind of family experience.

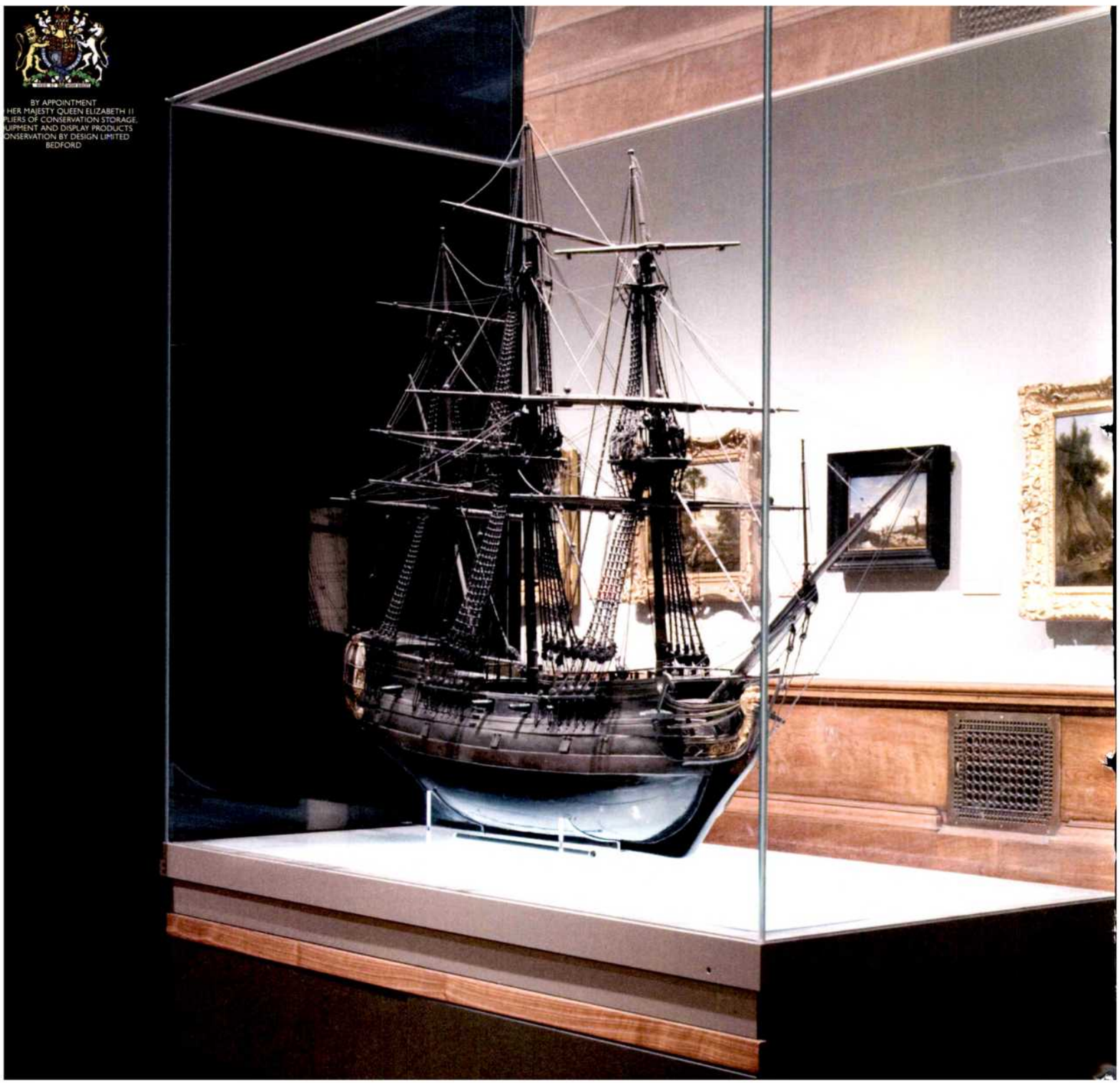
Into the light

The interior is initially a more sombre affair with the walls half-clad in a dark-grey MDF. The ground floor acts as an orientation point for visitors. It has a large reception area, cafe and shop, with stairs leading to the galleries on the floor above. Top lit, these stairs take one literally into the light, and what initially impresses you on the first floor is the amount of daylight illuminating the gallery spaces from slots in the ceilings. Windows in every room further enhance the artificial lighting.

The spaces themselves continue the irregularity apparent outside. There are variations to the size and shape of the galleries, their

TATE IMAGES (PELAGOS) © IWAN BAAN (LEFT FROM) © ALAN BOWNESS/HEPWORTH ESTATE (HEPWORTH AT WORK)




BY APPOINTMENT
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
PLIERS OF CONSERVATION STORAGE,
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ONSERVATION BY DESIGN LIMITED
BEDFORD

Project data

Cost £35m
Main funders Wakefield Council; Arts Council England; Heritage Lottery Fund; the Hepworth Estate; European Regional Development Fund; Homes and Communities Agency; Yorkshire Forward; Audrey and Stanley Burton Charitable Trust; the Headley Trust; Garfield Weston Foundation; the Wolfson Foundation
Architect David Chipperfield Architects
Structural, services and bridge engineer Ramboll UK
Landscape architect Gross Max
Quantity surveyor and project manager Turner & Townsend
Main contractor Laing O'Rourke Northern
Lighting consultant Arup
Fit-out contractor Realm Projects
Exhibition contractor Wood Mitchell, Museums Technik

orientation, the angles of their walls and the ceiling pitch.

Six galleries have been designed specifically with the permanent collection in mind, from light-sensitive works on paper to monumental sculptures and plasters, so that each room has a slightly different atmosphere, but also the architecture leads the eye towards the works on show.

At the top of the central flight of stairs, the first gallery has been installed sparsely with a few key examples of Hepworth's sculpture in wood, stone, marble and bronze. Each of these materials is synonymous with certain periods in Hepworth's career and the gallery offers a summary of her work. From this point, visitors can turn right into the collections displays or enter the suite of galleries dedicated to the temporary exhibitions. Either way, the point one returns to is this first gallery at the top of the stairs. The flow from gallery to gallery is logical and while the journey round them is basically one big circle, the way through is elegantly choreographed.

In the temporary exhibition galleries, Eva Rothschild's sense of space is exhilarating and she has used every available surface to show her work: walls, floor and even ceiling.

In the collection displays, Hepworth's sculpture is shown alongside works by her contemporaries and examples from successive generations. Artists such as Moore, Nicholson, Epstein, Piper, Sutherland, Nash and Dalwood are represented and these are supplemented with major loans from Tate, Arts Council England and the British Council among others, including pieces by Mondrian, Brancusi, Gabo and Gaudier-Brzeska. The installation not only positions Hepworth as a pioneering force within 20th-century British sculpture, at the centre of developments in London and then St Ives, but also as one of the main figures in the movement of international modernism. All this information is explained in clearly written wall panels and labels, and the installation is simple and restrained.

Innovative display space

The only interactive devices are some monitors showing footage of Hepworth at work and a few drawers to open in order to see fragile archive material in a gallery devoted to her working methods. The small-scale maquettes, tools and photos have been judiciously assembled here and the visual explanation of all the stages of the bronze casting process is especially informative.

The most innovative display though is in the gallery space devoted to the Hepworth Family Gift, a large collection of working models for bronzes in plaster and aluminium which has never been exhibited publicly before. These are almost haphazardly placed, in an arrangement that blurs the distinction between the formality of the gallery and the informality of an artist's studio. Here, it is possible to appreciate close-up the monumental, full-sized prototype for Winged Figure, in a way that it is impossible on London's Oxford Street where it can be seen on the front of the John Lewis department store.

Above: the galleries have been designed with the permanent collection in mind. Below: Barbara Hepworth's Figure (Archaean) is a significant work within the Hepworth Family Gift

Leaving The Hepworth Wakefield via the footbridge over the river Calder, I feel a sense of optimism that has been lacking of late in the cultural sector. But David Chipperfield, the architect of the Hepworth Wakefield and the recently opened Turner Contemporary, has voiced a note of caution about how far one building can transform a city, let alone an entire region. However, there is a pervading sense of assurance about his design that is proving contagious. More than 175,000 people had visited by in its first 11 weeks suggesting that the Hepworth Wakefield has got off to a very good start.

Stephen Feeke is the curator of the New Art Centre, Roche Court. Hot Touch, Eva Rothschild ends on 9 October

© IWAN BAAN (GALLERY SHOT); © JONTY WILDE (FIGURE)

Temporary exhibition

Court on Canvas: Tennis in Art, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham

Game, set and match to the Barber Institute, which has served up an ace exhibition about art and tennis, writes *Mark Suggitt*

Court on Canvas opened at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in May this year, promoting itself as the first exhibition to explore lawn tennis in art. Thematic shows are always a good way of taking a new look at a subject, but why here at Birmingham University?

Well, tennis is the summer game, and it was developed in nearby Edgbaston in the 1850s. And Ann Sumner, the director of the Barber, has long-cherished combining her passions for art and tennis. If this was not enough, Athena's famous Tennis Girl poster (you know the one) was shot on Birmingham University's tennis courts. The introduction to the show also states that the game was played by a number of artists, some of whose work is represented here.

The result is a fascinating insight into artistic responses to tennis, mainly from a British perspective. Given that the game's development took place here before photography could record players in action, this is understandable. The work is hung in the coolly elegant gallery on a green background that works well for the subject. The gallery is

Top: A Summer Shower by Edith Hayllar. Above: André Lhote's painting Tennis Players.
Right: Christopher Wood's Tennis Players has echoes of Picasso

broken down into themed areas: an introduction; lawn tennis's heyday in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; tennis parties; urban tennis; photographic responses; and sketches.

Hazy summer days

The earliest work on show is an anonymous portrait of a male player of 1767 standing before an old-style court wearing a white silk waistcoat and a turban. Lawn tennis developed as a game for country-house parties and the lawns of affluent suburbia. It was one of the cultural changes that led to more freedoms for women, allowing them to exercise and meet men in public. The earlier works reflect these concerns with artists such as Edith and Mary Hayllar and George Kilburne producing works that portray idealised images of endless summers that were about to be blown away by the first world war.

Tennis clubs boomed in the 1920s and 1930s and the pace and popularity of the game picked up. The Wimbledon Championships were established and its centre court opened in 1922. Tennis parties became a part of the social scene.

This section is dominated by Glasgow boy and society painter John Lavery, whose beautifully composed works capture the movement of the players, especially the women in their long dresses. There is also a small 1927 Lowry depicting the back of a girl in tennis whites with a long black plait tied in a ribbon falling from her cloche hat; an earlier and possibly more innocent expression of one of his obsessions. The Dudley artist Percy Shakespeare is also represented with his Tennis. Bold and direct, it has the feel of a suburban Edward Hopper with a little nod towards the English painter and war artist William Roberts. Shakespeare's more conventional portrait of a seated Tennis Player illustrates the change in women's costume.

The interwar years produced some truly imaginative work inspired by tennis, although this cannot be said for the paintings' names. André Lhote's Tennis Players demonstrates an active cubism while Christopher Wood's Tennis Players of around 1925 depicting two female players has echoes of Picasso, Matisse and Chagall. Paul Nash's Event on the

© ADLTC MUSEUM/DACS (LHOTE). © BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY (HAYLLAR). PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID ROWAN (WOOD)

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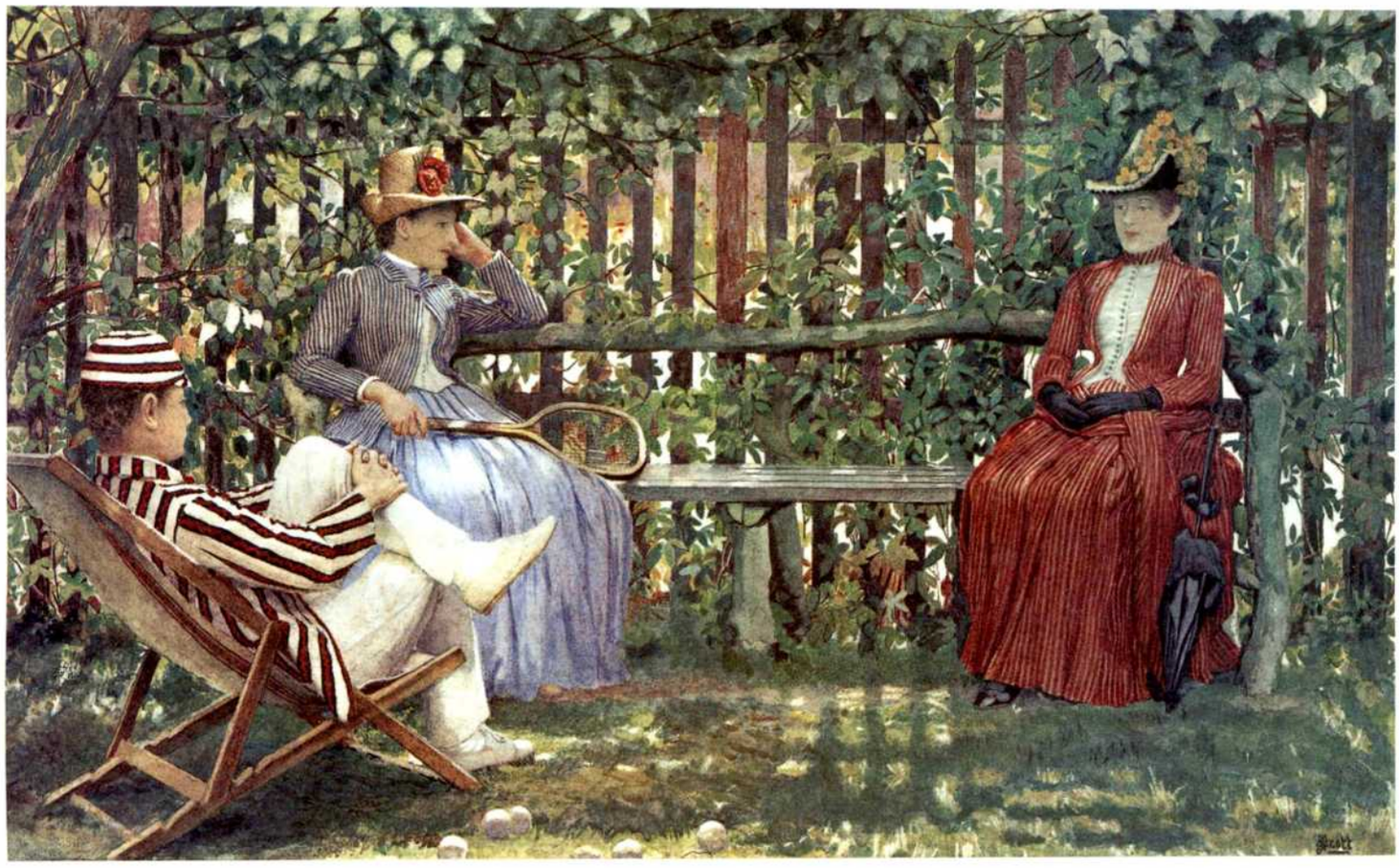


Above: John Scott's After the Tennis Match helped establish the combination of lawn tennis and lazy summer days.
Below: Charles Sargeant Jagger's sculpture of the Prince of Wales (Later Edward VIII) Dressed for Tennis

Project data

Cost £145,000
Funders Henry Barber Trust £109,600; Friends of the Barber Institute £18,000; DJW Turner Trust £10,000; Patrons of the Barber Institute £5,000; Department of History of Art, University of Birmingham £1,000; LTA Warwickshire £1,000; Harry Gem Project £400
Design and installation Showcase Services (A Gem of a Game)
Catalogue publisher Philip Wilson Publishing (now IB Tauris)
Catalogue/print materials design Webb & Webb
Fine art transport Martinspeed
Exhibition ends 18 September

Downs looks as English as tuppence at first glance, but the strangely placed tennis ball displays his fascination with landscape and abstraction.

Athena poster

The section on urban tennis also has some fascinating work, including Laura Knight's Spring in St John's Wood, which shows a game going on in a back garden. Nearby is the Eric Ravilious sketch for the model he was commissioned to produce for the 1937 Paris International Exhibition depicting tennis, football and cricket. Sadly, this model now longer exists but the design is typical of his imagined versions of reality, incorporating racket shapes and lawn rollers.

It's also a shame that his Tennis in the Park triptych has remained in Bristol. Ravilious was a keen tennis player, Eric Gill and Duncan Grant were probably less so and their work in the section on sketches both depict a version of the game probably not played in suburbia; nude tennis. Tennis as a subject for artistic inspiration seems to have waned in the postwar period as the game became more professionalised.

The final section on photography offers a clue to why this happened. Shutter speeds were now able to capture the players in motion. The professional players were becoming popular heroes and posed for studio photographers such as Bassano. There is a lovely portrait of the English player Betty Batt perched on an Alvar Aalto Paimio chair, her wooden racket leaning into its sinuous curves. There are some recent works however, most notably Tom Phillips's Seven Ages of Man, which marks a life "measured out in Wimbledons" through his greying hair applied to seven shaved tennis balls.

The smaller gallery opposite houses a short history of the local development of the game and an array of tennis equipment showing that without good lawn mowers and rubber balls, the game would never have developed. A Gem of a Game has a small section on tennis fashion and accessories, which has some lovely things but rather peters out and misses the contribution to male style in the form of Fred Perry sportswear, Dunlop Green Flashes plimsolls and Lacoste and Björn Borg-clad casuals. The final section features that Athena, poster, whose appeal remains undiminished, the shop having already sold out of the postcard.

This fascinating exhibition is supported by an excellent illustrated book. It has much in common with the A Day in the Sun: Outdoor Pursuits in the Art of the 1930s at Nottingham University's Djanogly Gallery in 2006. It is understated, with well-written labels that place the works in a historical and social context. It has no audiovisuals and interactives and, frankly, you don't always need them. Well-arranged and interpreted work can be enough.

Mark Suggitt is the director of the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site

© AELTC MUSEUM (SCOTT), © NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES, CARDIFF (JAGGER)

Temporary exhibition

Memoranda, Crafts Study Centre, Farnham

Four artists provide a fascinating insight into the Crafts Study Centre's Collection, writes *Peter Mason*

The Crafts Study Centre is "Britain's memory bank for craft", writes Glenn Adamson, the deputy head of research and head of graduate studies at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), in the publication to accompany the centre's Memoranda exhibition.

The Crafts Study Centre houses a unique collection of craft items and archival material relating to the work and lives of makers. For Memoranda, curators Tessa Peters and Janice West have invited four artists to respond to items in the collection and to exhibit the examples they have chosen alongside their own work.

A memorandum is a message to the writer or to its recipient, the word itself embodying the notion of memory. The items from the collection that stimulated the interest of the artists the most are not the finished pieces but test pieces, note books, memorabilia, and reference objects that shed light on the ideas behind the creativity of the 20th-century's leading makers such as Lucie Rie, Edward Johnston and Bernard Leach.

It's always a joy to walk into the gallery at the Crafts Study Centre. Although small, it is light, cool and uncluttered. Laura Potter, the first of the four artists, is a jeweller whose recent work has explored the emotional support provided by jewellery, particularly in relation to loss and remembrance. She has created an archive of her own, featuring 25 boxes containing unfinished work from her studio and an accompanying catalogue. She has chosen two pieces from the centre's collection that would not normally be shown in an exhibition and exemplify what an archive is all about – a box of Rie test pieces, and a piece of calligraphy by Johnston – "56 'a's made as wrongly as possible".

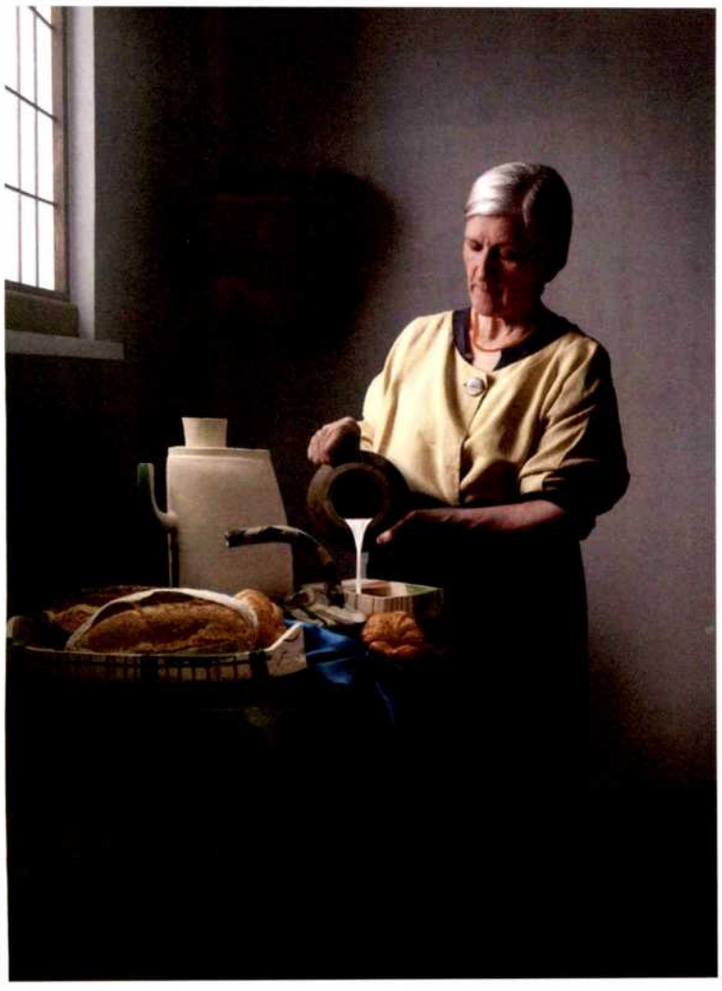
Exploring museology

Among the pieces made by Elaine Wilson are two ceramic heads with their shape taken from a profile featured in one of Rie's photograph albums. They have their eyes closed, are covered in layer on layer of decoration and seem to be looking inward, absorbed in their own memories. Other works by Wilson are less directly related to the collection, such as the six female figurines holding guns wearing evening dresses decorated with traditional feminine motifs of flowers and birds. This circle of unsettling figures face outwards, with guns pointed at the viewer.

Left: An Incomplete Archive of Unfinished Ideas by Laura Potter uses material that includes Lucie Rie ceramics to think about memory. Below: details from Stephen Dixon's Letters from Tripoli. Right: Maisie Broadhead's photograph Made in Britton is a self-conscious reference to Vermeer. Far right: Rie's photograph album is part of Elaine Wilson's Family China

Maisie Broadhead creates C-type digital prints inspired by paintings in public and private collections. Diamond Geezer is based on a portrait of a Belgium diamond dealer and Go On Then is based on The Suitor Accepted by Jean-Frédéric Schall.

The piece Broadhead has created for the exhibition, Made in Britton, is my favourite in the show. The work referenced is Vermeer's 17th-century painting The Milkmaid. The model Broadhead used for the milkmaid is Alison Britton, who curated an exhibition called Three by One at the centre in 2009. The milk jug is an 13th- or 14th-century English pitcher from Leach's personal collection and the milk is being poured into a piece made by Britton herself. Not only is there a perfect symmetry about the imagery but the overall result has the powerful simplicity of Vermeer's original.



PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILIP SAYER (POTTER, WILSON)

Project data

Cost £5,000
Funders Crafts Study Centre; Arts Council England Grants for the Arts £3,250; Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design £1,000
Curators and editors Tessa Peters, Janice West
Artists Maisie Broadhead, Stephen Dixon, Laura Potter, Elaine Wilson
Book design and exhibition graphics Rosamund Saunders
Photography Philip Sayer
Exhibition ends 1 October

Memory plays a vital part in the work of Stephen Dixon. Central to his contribution to this exhibition is a 12-drawer cabinet containing a mix of original documents and found and reworked objects. They give tantalising snippets of information about the life of a young Italian soldier who ended up as a prisoner of war in Tripoli in the 1940s. In this piece the artist's practice and the nature of archives and museology blend into a work of great power.

Academic exhibition

The exhibition is completed by a fascinating selection of pieces chosen by the curators of the exhibition and the Crafts Study Centre archivist. These give an insight into the range of work in the collection, the importance of it, and make public the importance of the collection for research by contemporary makers and students.

Works chosen include beautifully handwritten weaving notes by Alice Hindson that document her practice and serve as a memoranda for her and others; Bernard Leach's 1913 diary, which he used as a day book recording events, items of interest, ideas and quotations that inspired him; and three painted stoneware cylinders made by Eric James Mellon in 1969. These convey some of Mellon's ideas about freedom, or the lack of it, in the 1960s.

Memoranda provides a welcome insight into the world of the archivist seen through the eyes of the artist. The most successful exhibits are those where memory, recording, collecting and archiving are blended with the artist's practice in a seemingly effortless way – for example Dixon's Letters from Tripoli, and Broadhead's Made in Britton.

The exhibition has also produced some fascinating new works that stand on their own, such as Wilson's Family China I and II. Other work, while contributing to the insights provided by this exhibition, will have less meaning when taken out of context.

This exhibition and the accompanying publication say as much about collections and archives as they do about craft and will therefore be of great interest to museum professionals and archivists. It is, and this is not a criticism, an academic exhibition of the sort that a gallery based in a university should be commissioning. The works engage and intrigue on first viewing, but visitors will be rewarded by spending time on each exhibit – a lot is revealed through studying them in the context of the material in the free-sheet or the accompanying book.

The book also succeeds in its own right as a contribution to the literature on craft and museum studies. It is a well-produced and thought-provoking publication. As well as interviews with the two curators, four artists and the collections manager, Jean Vacher, there are essays by Daniel Miller, professor of material culture at University College London, and the V&A's Glenn Adamson.

Peter Mason is a writer on culture

Books

Art Theft and the Case of the Stolen Turners

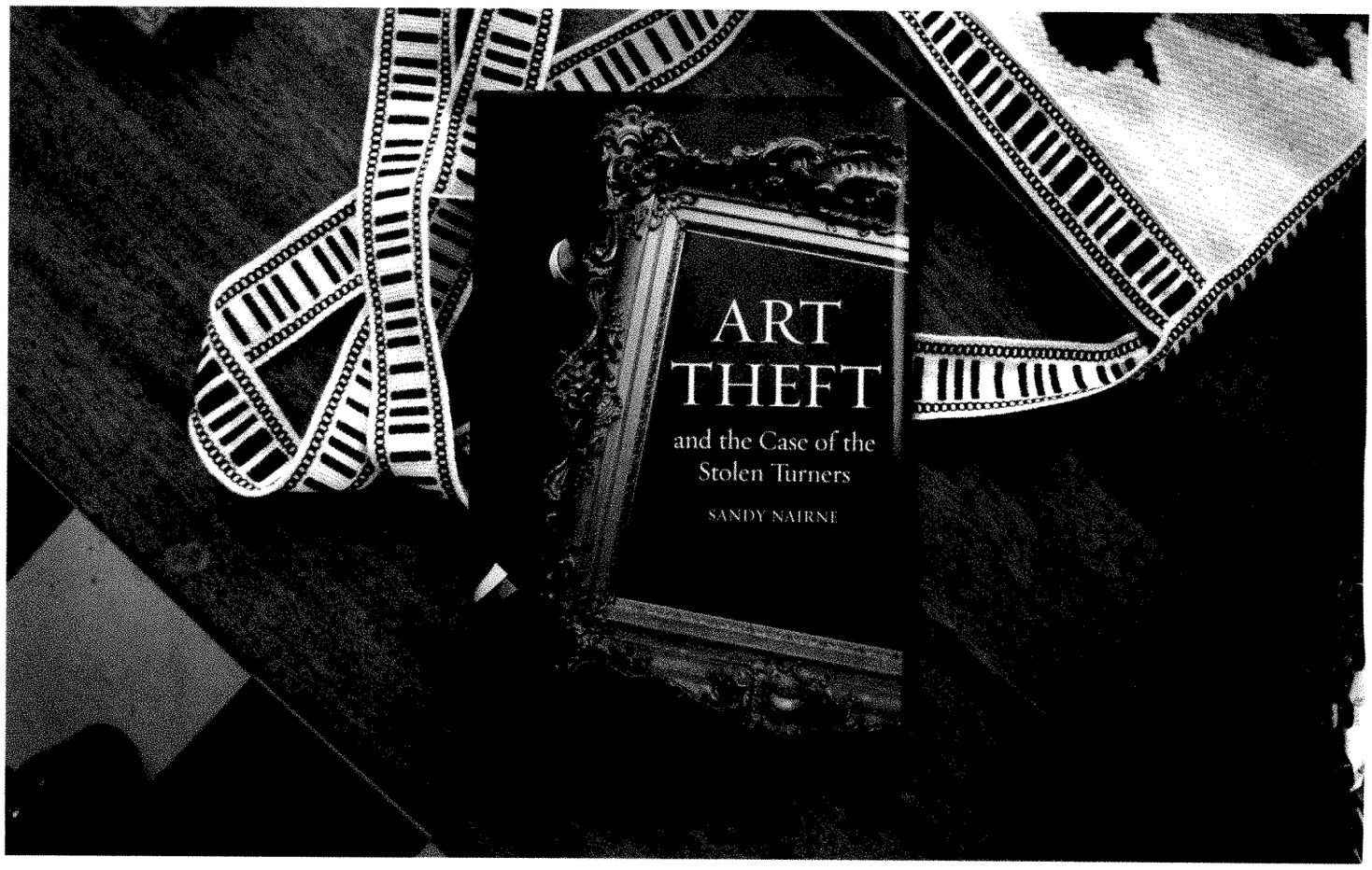
There's plenty of cloak-and-dagger stuff in this book about an audacious theft, but it's a whodunit with few answers, thinks *Timothy Mason*

On 28 July 1994, three paintings were stolen from the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt where they had been on loan for an exhibition, Goethe and the Visual Arts. One was Caspar David Friedrich's Nebelschwaden; the other two were Turners from the Tate, Shade and Darkness and Light and Colour. This is the story of the Tate's eight-and-a-half year pursuit of its missing paintings.

From the beginning, this was a controversial theft, veiled in mystery, rumour, charge and countercharge. No sooner had the first pre-publication copies of Sandy Nairne's Art Theft and the Case of the Stolen Turners made an appearance, journalists, critics, bloggers and self-appointed watchdogs began a word by word analysis of Nairne's text. They were looking not for clues as to the whereabouts of the stolen Turners – they had long since come home – but a greater understanding of how their return was secured: had the Tate paid a ransom? Who were the thieves? Were they rewarded and if so, how? Was there a Serbian connection? Why were no charges made?

Immediately after the loss of the paintings was reported to the Tate, Sandy Nairne, then its director of programmes, was appointed leader of a small team charged with the task of trying to retrieve the stolen works. Correction – Nairne was the small team, supplemented from time to time by members of Tate staff including conservator Roy Perry, who emerges as the Q of the tale. Nick Serota remains very much a background figure – a voice on the telephone, reminiscent of Mission Impossible.

Nairne is a much-respected visual arts administrator, caught up in the murky world of art theft, fraud and shady deals. There are all the classic scenes of a John Le Carré plot – a hotel called Arabella, the early morning flights, the eastbound platform of Westbourne Park tube station, the Millennium Dome, the interrupted family life, the punting regatta, a paddle steamer on the Rhine. And undercover policemen, one known as Peter who masquerades for a short time as Andrew Wilton, the Tate's senior Turner expert, and another, Jurek Rokoszynski, known



inevitably as Rocky, who rapidly emerges as one of the central figures in this tangled tale, when he is not holidaying in Galapagos or sailing across the Tasman. There is a lateral-thinking government minister and the art-loving insurance broker, Robert Hiscox. There's even a role for Helen Mirren, then-DI Jill McTigue of Scotland Yard's art and antiques Squad. The characters come so thick and fast that I often had to check back to remind myself just who was who.

Because it is Nairne's story, it is told very much from his perspective. It is a frank and revealing book but it is also a restrained one. Nairne is loyal to his former employers and he knows where the eggshells are and where to tiptoe with care. To be fair, the book is peppered with extracts from interviews conducted with many of the leading protagonists, but these tend only to embellish the view from the Tate. There is no interview with the enigmatic German lawyer, Edgar Liebrucks, who acted as a Tate-paid go-between, bringing messages from those holding the missing paintings and negotiating their return. And we emerge no wiser about who were those thieves, rumoured to be Balkan criminals.

Looking positively at the outcome of this complex story, both Turners are back at Tate Britain and the Friedrich has returned to Kunsthalle Hamburg. Art Theft never quite gets to the bottom of the controversies that have lingered around what is ultimately a success story – not least what was the exact use of the £3.5m which the Tate spent in retrieving the two paintings? The funds were part of the insurance deal that the paymaster general secured for the Tate. The attempts to explain where the money went and whether it rewarded criminals range from the bland to the blind eye. I couldn't help but be reminded of that old cup-and-ball routine that used to be played on boxes in Oxford Street – now you see it, now you don't.

By Sandy Nairne
Reaktion Books, £20
ISBN 978 1 86189 851 7

Timothy Mason is a museum consultant

On my bookshelf

Cressida Finch

The Hare with the Amber Eyes: a Hidden Inheritance, by Edmund de Waal

I first picked up The Hare with the Amber Eyes: a Hidden Inheritance as holiday reading. I was drawn by the title, but, expecting fiction, I instead found a manual on material culture that is worthy of the reading list of any museum studies student or professional.

Edmund de Waal wrote the book after inheriting a collection of 264 netsuke, tiny Japanese wood and ivory carvings. He tells the story of his search for their history, which becomes that of their various owners, from their first collector, Charles Ephrussi, a cousin of his great-grandfather in 1870s Paris, via Vienna, to post-war Tokyo and finally to London.

This account is an inspirational example of how to start with an object, and weave a tale from it which makes the reader feel a connection with the individual family members, and then through their stories reveal a wider historical picture.

De Waal is a potter by profession and he has a feel for sculpture. His description of the tactile nature of the netsuke leaves you wanting to track them down and stroke them. De Waal's book ends with an invitation to see more photographs of the netsuke on his website, where seeing each one felt like meeting an old friend.

The Hare with the Amber Eyes is also a musing on collectors and collecting, how to look at art, and on the meaning of the glass case itself.

Cressida Finch is exhibitions manager at the Imperial War Museum, London

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Torre Abbey, Torquay, 29 September 2011

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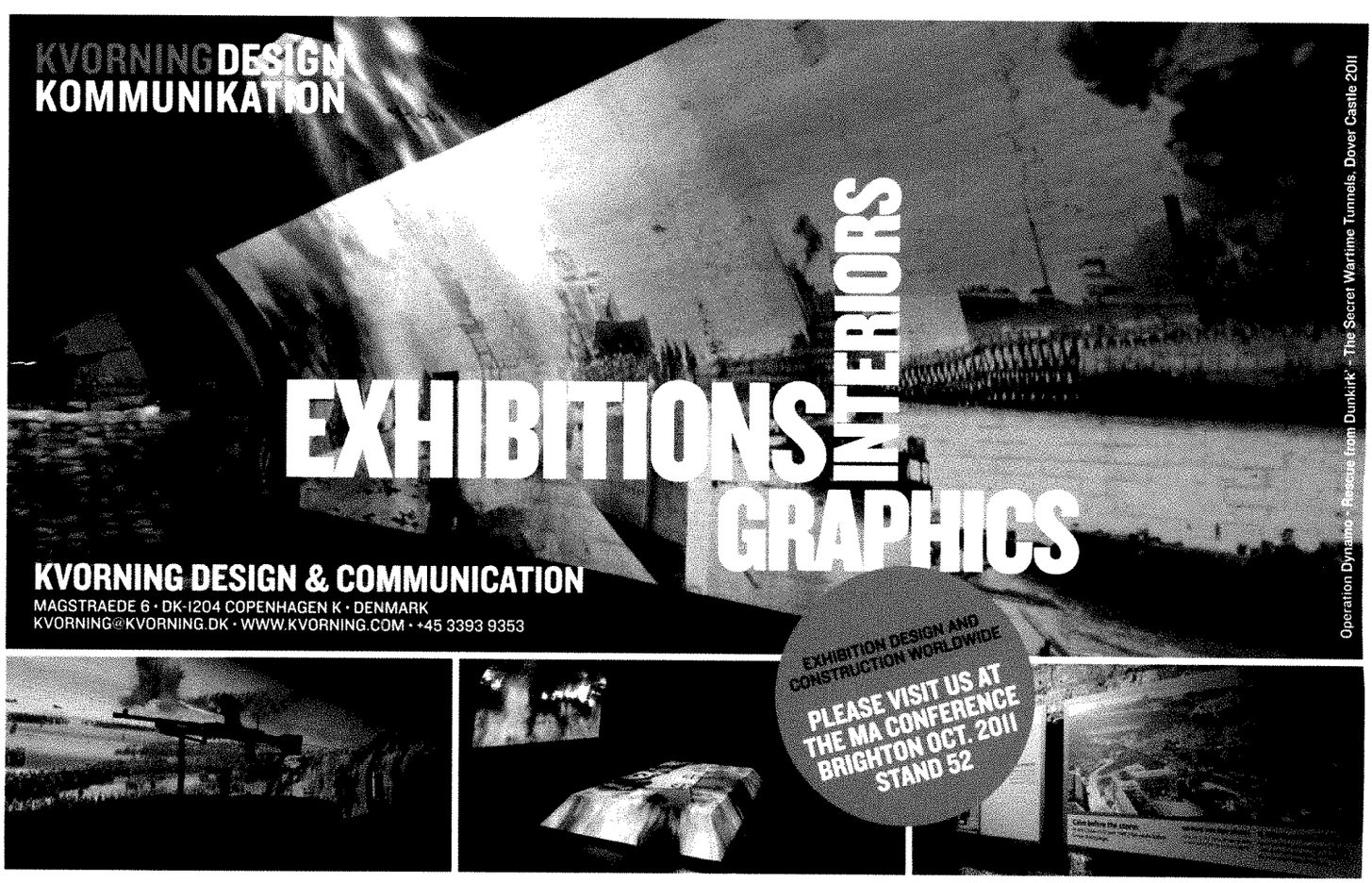

Peter Gathercole (1929-2010)

Peter Gathercole, curator, archaeologist, museum ethnographer and academic, died at the end of last year aged 81. He studied history and archaeology at Peterhouse, Cambridge, followed by two years at the Institute of Archaeology, London. Here, Peter was taught by the Marxist scholar V Gordon Childe, the exposition of whose work Peter was to devote a large part of his scholarly life.

Peter's first museum post was at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery where he held a two-year training post from 1954 to 1956 in the department of archaeology, ethnography and local history. From there he was appointed curator of the Borough Museum and Art Gallery in Scunthorpe (now the North Lincolnshire Museum). In 1958 Peter moved to New Zealand as lecturer in anthropology at the University of Otago and keeper of anthropology at Otago Museum. In 1969 he returned to the UK to become a lecturer in ethnology at the University of Oxford. Based at the Pitt Rivers Museum, he was instructed by the curator Bernard Fagg to curate an exhibition of the museum's collection of "artificial curiosities" from James Cook's second voyage. He contributed to the study of Cook-voyage collections for the rest of his life.

Peter Gathercole pioneered museum ethnography

In 1970, Peter moved back to Cambridge to become curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, where he reorganised the museum's extensive reserve collections.

In 1981 he resigned from the museum, devoting himself to his role as deputy dean and then dean of Darwin College, Cambridge. He was a gifted teacher who encouraged students to work with objects, to be inspired by them, and to test their ideas against them.

Peter also played a key role in founding the Museum Ethnographers Group. He organised the initial meeting in 1975 and served as the group's first chairman. Museum ethnography in the UK would not have the status it does today if it had not been for Peter's initial efforts in setting up and guiding the group in its early years and supporting it ever after.

Politics were an important part of his life. He promoted critical discussion of ethical and political museological issues such as access to collections, repatriation and the influence of art markets. He joined the Communist Party as a young man and remained a lifelong Marxist, though of the least doctrinaire kind.

Peter's contribution to museums, and to the wider world, will take a particularly long time to unravel.

Jeremy Coote is joint head of collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Anita Herle is senior curator for world anthropology at the Museum for Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Maureen Attrill (1950-2011)

Maureen Attrill, keeper of art at Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, has died suddenly and unexpectedly.

Maureen's career started after a degree in science at the University of Glasgow (she initially wanted to go into medicine, but took an elective unit in art history and decided she liked it better) before completing an art gallery and museum studies diploma at Manchester. After a spell at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, she came to Plymouth in 1978 and gave nearly 33 years of service to the museum.

She worked hard and with immense commitment to develop the art collections; the sight of her office light still glowing into the wee hours of the night was a familiar one. Maureen's mastery of navigating the vagaries of private donors, dealers and artists to acquire new and exciting pieces for the collection was always an education for anyone who worked with her and a lesson in attention to detail. The same meticulous approach was also paid to the many hundred enquiries that annually came across her desk. Her knowledge of the collections was encyclopaedic and among her main accomplishments were achieving Designated status for the Cottonian collection of Old Master prints and drawings in 1998, the redisplay of Mount Edgcumbe House and the display of Drake-related materials with the National Trust at Buckland Abbey. In recent years, she worked to acquire in lieu of tax a large number of Sir Joshua Reynolds' paintings from Port Eliot and contributed to an exhibition of works by Reynolds produced in collaboration with the University of Plymouth, which she had close links with.

Maureen Attrill was an inspirational figure at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery for over 30 years

During times of limited resources, Maureen ran the department and vast collections single-handedly, at the same time as producing upwards of four temporary exhibitions a year. Her eye for detail was considerable, demonstrated in her flair and ability to hang complex exhibitions cohesively, even if she was prone to driving the front of house team to distraction while doing so. This particular talent was born out in her last hang of the Plymouth Society of Artists' work, which, fittingly, acted as a backdrop to her memorial service, which was held in the gallery.

The letters and memories of Maureen that flooded in after the news of her death are testament to the number of people – artists, historians, collectors, Friends, visitors and more – with whom she worked with and made friendships with.

Of all her qualities, her sense of humour, a fierce passion for the art collections, for Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery as an institution, and her modesty are the characteristics that stand out. Maureen's presence will continue to be felt as projects that she initiated come to fruition in the years ahead.

Alison Cooper is the acting keeper of art at Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery

Profile Stuart McDonald: conservator

Stuart McDonald is the head of engineering and furniture conservation at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, which recently re-opened following a £46.4m redevelopment programme. His team worked on the installation of large objects into the 16 new galleries including telescopes, steam engines and the museum's Millennium Clock.

What have you been doing during your redevelopment?
We have been using our engineering and technical skills to install the more complex pieces. We helped put a lighthouse back on show; it was four and a half tons fully assembled. One of the issues during the work has been opening up the cellars, which meant the floor-loading limits changed in the galleries, hallways and access routes. We worked closely with the structural engineers on specific paths around the building and methodologies of bringing things through. The Window on the World gallery is a four-storey display and we have installed an autogyro high up on the wall. It has been flipped 90 degrees to look like it's flying. There's also a motorcycle and a racing car up there.

Are there very small things, too?
We have scientific instruments and horology items including a very nice rolling ball clock, which is very delicate. It stops when dust gets in the track and needs to be wound every three days.

Your team members have very different backgrounds, don't they?
Within the conservation world, there's a tried-and-tested route to get a degree, then a post-graduate qualification before concentrating on textiles, paper and so on. A lot of the objects we deal with are not just two-dimensional like carpets; we need people who have engineering know-how and manual dexterity and who are mechanically-minded. Some of the delicate items we have are in such poor condition and so difficult to take apart that our guys have to manufacture their own special tools before tackling the job itself.

Unusual challenges are part of Stuart McDonald's job

Did your previous career servicing planes in the RAF prepare you for this job?
A lot of the skills are useful and I learned about the conservation side when I came here. I left school just after the Falklands war and Mrs Thatcher was building up the armed forces so it seemed like a good opportunity.

Do your skills make you good with DIY and flat-pack furniture?
I'm OK sorting out my own pipes, but I'd never do anyone else's plumbing just in case it went wrong. With furniture, the secret is to throw the plan away, spread everything out and approach it methodically.

Moves

Roger Bowdler has joined English Heritage as its new designation director, following the retirement of **Peter Beacham**.

Louise Connell has been appointed as the new director of Falmouth Art Gallery. She is a former senior manager at Bolton Museums.

Andrew Nairne takes up the directorship of Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, in November. He is presently executive director, arts, at Arts Council England.

Stephen LeMottee takes up his post as the new executive director of the East Midlands Museums Service this month. He previously worked at the National Trust.

Christoph Grunenberg, director of Tate Liverpool, will take over the directorship of the Kunsthalle Bremen in November.

Neil Couzens has left the National Army Museum, London, where he was commercial development manager to join Wandsworth Museum, London, as director.

At-Bristol chief executive **Goéry Delacôte** becomes the museum's president and chief scientific adviser in April.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth, has appointed historian **Duncan Redford** as a subject specialist in modern naval history to work with the museum's curatorial staff.

Bradley Hemmings and **Jenny Sealey** are the artistic directors of the London 2012 Paralympic Games. They are artistic directors of the Greenwich and Docklands Paralympics opening ceremony and the Graeae theatre company respectively.

Neil Couzens

Louise Connell

Kids in Museums news: art dealer **Philip Mould** is the new chairman; **Tony Butler**, director of the Museum of East Anglian Life, is a trustee.

Diversify trainees news: **Mel Tettey** has become business manager at Historic Royal Palaces; **Katie Crowther** has a part-time trainee science explainer position at the Centre for Life, Newcastle; and **Gemma Dhami** has joined Worcestershire County Council as museums development officer.

Anne Edwards has retired as head of education, volunteering and visitor engagement at Kent Wildlife Trust. She is honorary curator at the St Margaret's Bay Museum, Dover.

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Kimberley Blount

What attracted you to the job? The varied nature of the role. I look after an important collection of objects and art works while also working in one of the most famous stately homes in the UK.
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A new app from the Museum of London connects users with London's Roman past

A figure of a Cycladic warrior-hunter, dating from around 2200BC, has been acquired by the British Museum, London

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● Horsham District Council & the Friends of Horsham Museum wish to dispose of the following items to a Registered, Accredited (or seeking Accreditation) museum: nine wick trimmers; six frosted glass lampshades; 15 fur garments including coat, muffs, tippets and gloves; 25 men's garments including suits, shirts and an army coat; 39 baby clothes; 16 ladies' garments including a **Victorian mourning cape**; 36 pieces of linen including doilies and aprons; 65 pieces of underwear including nightgowns, petticoats and corsets; and three bonnets and a bowler hat. Details available on request. Recipient museums to arrange collection.
Contact: Teresa Lefevre
email: Teresa.Lefevre@horsham.gov.uk

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Contact: Vicky Woollard
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● As part of its Effective Collections project, **Coventry Transport Museum** has a number of transport related items for disposal. They include a small number of cars and motorcycles, and a larger collection of motor vehicle components. A complete list is available.
Contact: Steve Bagley
email: Steve.bagley@transport-museum.co.uk
tel: 02476 234270

● The Imperial War Museum has started a five-year review of its collections. Having completed the aircraft collection review, it is considering the disposal of up to 15 items from the **aircraft collection** and starting a period of consultation on these items. Most are offered as gifts; a small number may be offered for sale. Expressions of interest from appropriate museums are welcomed. Recipients must organise collection. A list of the items is available from the museum.
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tel: 0207 416 5252
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● Lincolnshire County Council offers a small range of late 19th-century/early 20th-century industrial and **agricultural objects** in a variety of conditions along with a small number of everyday early 20th-century furniture items. Full list on request. This offer is open until 1 November.
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email: k.hay@vam.ac.uk

Wanted

● A University of York researcher would like to speak to any museums with collections from the mesolithic sites at Star Carr, near Flixton, North Yorkshire. She is mapping the distribution of finds from the various excavations that have taken place at the site with a view to improving access.
Contact: Nicky Milner
email: nicky.milner@york.ac.uk

● Cardiff Castle is seeking items associated with second world war air-raid shelters, in particular an **air-raid siren**.
Contact: Matthew Williams
tel: 02920 878104,
email: matthewwilliams@cardiff.gov.uk

Acquisitions

● The Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, have bought the manuscript of Jane Austen's incomplete novel, **The Watsons**, at auction for £993,250. The Jane Austen Memorial Trust supported the bid enabling the Bodleian to gain the funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which made the purchase possible.

● The British Museum, London, has acquired a **Cycladic hunter-warrior** figurine with help from the Art Fund. Dating from 2200BC, the marble figure of a male joins the museum's collection of over 25 female Cycladic figurines. The Art Fund gave £100,000 towards the total cost of £302,998; private donations came from individuals, the Curtain Foundation, and the Patrons of the British Museum.

John de Critz the Elder's portrait of James I has been bought by the National Trust for Montacute House, Somerset

● An engine that heralded the end of horses as boat-pullers has been acquired by the Canal Museum, London. The 300-kg Swedish-built **Bolinder** is now on display, complementing an existing exhibition that analyses and explains canal craft.

A drawing by Henry Moore of his friend Edna Ginesi has been bought at auction by the Henry Moore Foundation

● The Henry Moore Foundation, Hertfordshire, has acquired an early pencil drawing by Henry Moore of his lifelong friend **Edna Ginesi**. Portrait of Mrs Raymond Coxon (Edna Ginesi) was bought at auction for £7,000.

● New acquisitions at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, Falmouth, include an archive of material relating to the four-masted barque Andromeda, which was wrecked on the rocks off Killigerran Head near Falmouth during **severe gales** in 1915; a 19th-century woolwork picture by local shipwright, William Henderson; and a race timer used to count down sailing races in the 1950s.

● The National Trust has bought two portraits at the Sotheby's auction on 6 July. The paintings represent key episodes in the history of two houses owned by the National Trust – **Dunham Massey,** Cheshire, and **Montacute House**, Somerset. The first painting, a portrait of a lady attributed to Robert Peake, is believed to be of Vere Egerton who married into the Booth family of Dunham Massey in 1619. It was purchased for £157,250, of which £61,328 was given by the Art Fund. The second painting, a portrait of James I, is by John de Critz the Elder, a court painter. It was purchased for £199,250, with funds from a bequest from the late Moira Carmichael and from other gifts and bequests to the National Trust.

● A rare French glass panel has been presented to the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, to mark the 60th anniversary of the Friends organisation. The panel, bought at auction, is a major work by **Jacques Gruber** depicting a romantic landscape in vibrant colours.

● The **Wickham Market Hoard** of 840 gold Iron Age coins has been saved for the nation, and will be displayed at Ipswich Museum. The Heritage Lottery Fund contributed £225,900; the Art Fund £20,000, and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund £20,000, alongside contributions of £10,000 each from the Headley Trust, Friends of Ipswich Museum and the Jennings Bequest.

Funding

● The **Elgar Birthplace Museum**, Worcestershire, has received £49,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £50,000 from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts to introduce new interactive displays, improve the reception and shop area, and install a new cafe bar. Work

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars.
For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary
020 7426 6940
lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Getting the most out of the AMA
7 September 2011, London
A workshop for anyone undertaking or thinking about undertaking the Associate of the Museums Association (AMA). The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. The afternoon session will explore the updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants are welcome to come for the entire day or just the afternoon.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Members' meetings
13 September 2011, Leeds City Museum, Leeds
The MA has recently introduced regional and national members' meetings, to keep members informed and to give them more input in the policies and direction of the association.

The next one will take place at Leeds City Museum. The all-day event is open to all MA members living and working in Yorkshire and Humberside. It is free of charge for all individual, institutional and corporate members to attend. Speakers include Gaby Porter, MA board member; John Roles, head of Museums and Galleries Leeds; Nial Adams president of the Yorkshire & Humberside Federation of Museums; plus MA director

will be finished for a pre-Christmas opening.

● The Fusilier Museum, Bury, will receive £2,500 from the charity Life for a Life Forests to allow the creation of a new fully searchable database for its 3,000-strong **medal archive**.

● The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £772,000 to the Manchester Museum for its £1.57m **Ancient Worlds** project to redisplay its ancient Egypt and archaeology collections in time for the centenary of their original opening in 2012. The three new Ancient Worlds galleries will be called Discovering Archaeology, Egyptian Worlds and Exploring Objects.

● Museums Galleries Scotland has announced its latest funding awards under the Recognition scheme, which supports nationally significant collections. Perth and Kinross Council receives £82,000 to modernise **Perth Museum and Art Gallery**. Planned improvements include the creation of new display spaces including one that will house the 3,000-year-old Carpow Logboat excavated in 2006 from the Tay Estuary. The **Glasgow School of Art** receives £16,800 to restore and conserve its Charles Rennie Mackintosh wall clocks.

● Seven museums and heritage organisations have been successful in the first round of the Museums Association's **Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund**. They are: the **Museum of English Rural Life**, University of Reading, A Sense of Place project (£81,702); the **Pitt Rivers Museum**, Oxford, for its Reel to Real project digitising its 20th-century sound collection (£78,212); **Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art** for (£68,912); **Paxton House**, Berwick-upon-Tweed (£56,700); the **Museum of the Manchester Regiment** (£53,031); **Creswell Heritage Trust** (£49,857); and the **Social History Curators Group** (£26,000).

Staff records of the British Postal Museum & Archive are now online

Documents relating to the women's suffrage movement have been placed on Unesco's Memory of the World Register

Awards

● A project that transformed the **Blists Hill Victorian Town** in Ironbridge Gorge has been given the RTPI West Midland's Award for Planning Achievement.

● Four community-run museums have won Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland heritage awards, with the **Sir John Moore Foundation** in Appleby Magna named as museum of the year. The foundation also took the award for work with young people with its Dig and Discover exhibit. The Best Project award went to the **Lightning Preservation Group** for the Quick Reaction Alert Hangar. **Ashby Museum**'s History of Ashby through Cartoons was named best exhibition. **Foxton Canal Museum** won Best Event award for the Foxton Locks Festival and a second one for collections care and development.

Web news

● The British Postal Museum & Archive, London, in partnership with research site Ancestry, has put online the Post Office Appointment Books, 1737-1969 – **1.5 million records** of postal employees. *www.ancestry.co.uk*

● The Museum of London and television channel History have developed **Streetmuseum Londinium**, a new app that allows users to see Roman London. *www.museumoflondon.org.uk*

● Notes and comments made by **Charles Darwin** in the pages of his own books are available online at: *www.biodiversitylibrary.org/collection/darwinlibrary*

Miscellaneous

● A group of eight documents telling the story of the **women's suffrage movement** is one of 20 items selected to represent the heritage of the UK on the Unesco UK Memory of the World Register. *www.unesco.org.uk/register*

● The collections, library and archive of the **Royal Academy of Arts**; the **Vaughan Williams Memorial Library**, English Folk Dance and Song Society, London; and the holdings of **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service** have been awarded Designated status for their collections.

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Mark Taylor and other key MA staff.
For more information visit www.museumsassociation.org/events

Museums Association Annual Conference & Exhibition
3-4 October 2011, Brighton Centre, Brighton
This year's MA conference comes at a time of huge change for the sector with the transition from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to Arts Council England (ACE) and the development of national strategies for museums in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The themes of conference reflect this turbulent period and the desire to grapple with the difficulties and opportunities that we face.

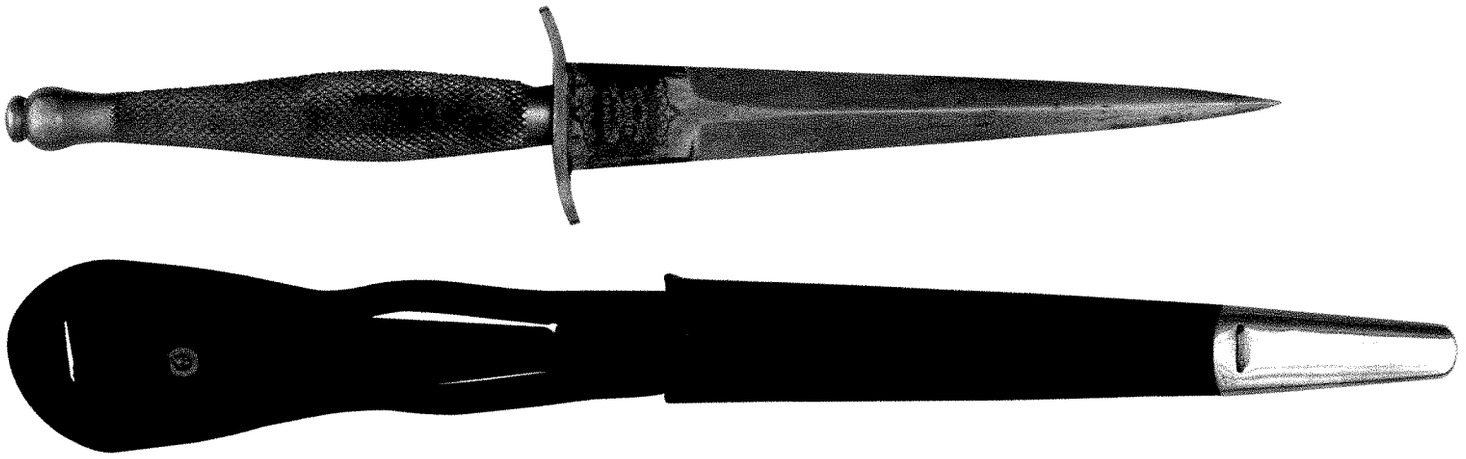
Keynote speakers include Tim Smit, chief executive of the Eden Project, Cornwall; ACE's chief operating officer Althea Afunshile; and Green party MP Caroline Lucas.

Brighton Pavilion MP and Green party leader Caroline Lucas is a keynote speaker at the MA's conference

A Museum Practice seminar programme, designed to offer practical and case-study led content, will run alongside the conference. The programme is free and will consist of 26 45-minute seminars. Topics include: pest control; copyright; commercial opportunities; Accreditation; and digital innovations. Entry is on a first-come-first-served basis, so please make sure you arrive in good time to avoid disappointment.

For more information, visit: www.museumsassociation.org/conference

Mentor Refresher
3 November 2011, London
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to receive an update on any developments in the scheme. It's also a chance to catch up with MA staff and share information.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org



Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife 1941, National Army Museum, London

Robert Fleming

"This may seem, at first sight, to be an unusual exhibit to choose, but it has a lot to say about military history from a popular culture perspective.

Using this knife, British commandos inflicted heavy blows to the heart of the Nazi machine during the second world war. German forces never knew when the commandos were going to strike and take out scores of their soldiers before disappearing into the night. The psychological effect it had on the Nazis was matched only by the positive effect it had on morale back in Britain.

Later adopted as the badge and insignia of the commandos, the double-edge knife was the perfect weapon; deadly when used for stabbing or throwing over distances. It became a symbol of pride.

It features in our exhibition because the publisher DC Thomson also chose it as the symbol of the Commando comic. It has been proudly displayed on the cover for the entire 50-year history of the comic and we are showing the real thing alongside artwork, illustrations and items from the museum's collection of equipment, uniforms and personal artefacts of the first commandos and their missions.

It's a chance to look at this weapon from a symbolic perspective rather than merely seeing it as a piece of metal used for killing.

The comic is still going strong today and is still telling the same kinds of stories. Indeed, the original brief and artistic style haven't changed at all. Its readership peaked back in the 1970s and 1980s before falling away a little with the advent of pay TV and video games, which younger generations could probably relate to a little better.

I think it has managed to survive because other comics flirted with new formats that didn't catch on. One comic tried to tie-in with Action Man toys, diluting its original content in the process.

The Commando comic is very popular among old soldiers and serving forces alike. We have a picture of squaddies in Afghanistan avidly reading a copy.

There's a very active secondhand market and we've been trying to get our hands on a pristine version of the very first issue as the DC Thomson copy has holes punched through it to enable it to be placed in a binder. The comic sold for a penny in 1961, but prices now go up to £900. There are collectors out there with all 4,500 issues. They all presumably have sheds, spare rooms and understanding wives.

Robert Fleming is the curator of fine and decorative art at the National Army Museum, London. Draw Your Weapons: the Art of Commando Comics opens this month

My own interest in this stuff stems from a long family military history both in Australia and among my British ancestors. When I was doing an archaeology course in Sydney I worked on the excavation of the Dawes Point fortress close to where the opera house is now.

History brought me to the UK to find out where we all came from; that and the typical Australian thing of doing Europe, of course."

Interview by John Holt. Draw your Weapons: the Art of Commando Comics runs at the National Army Museum, London, until 29 April 2012

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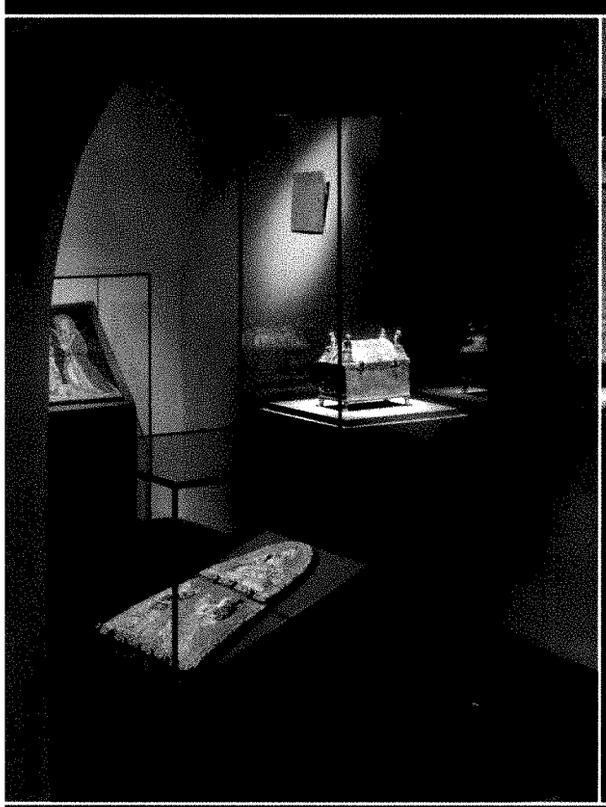

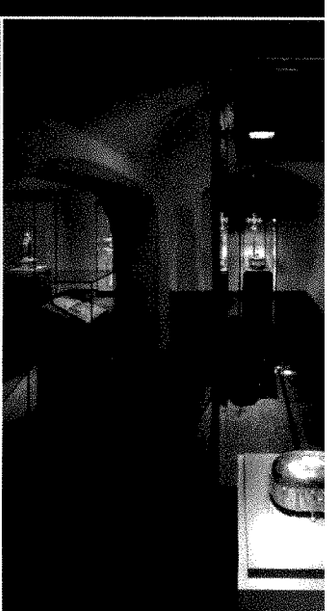

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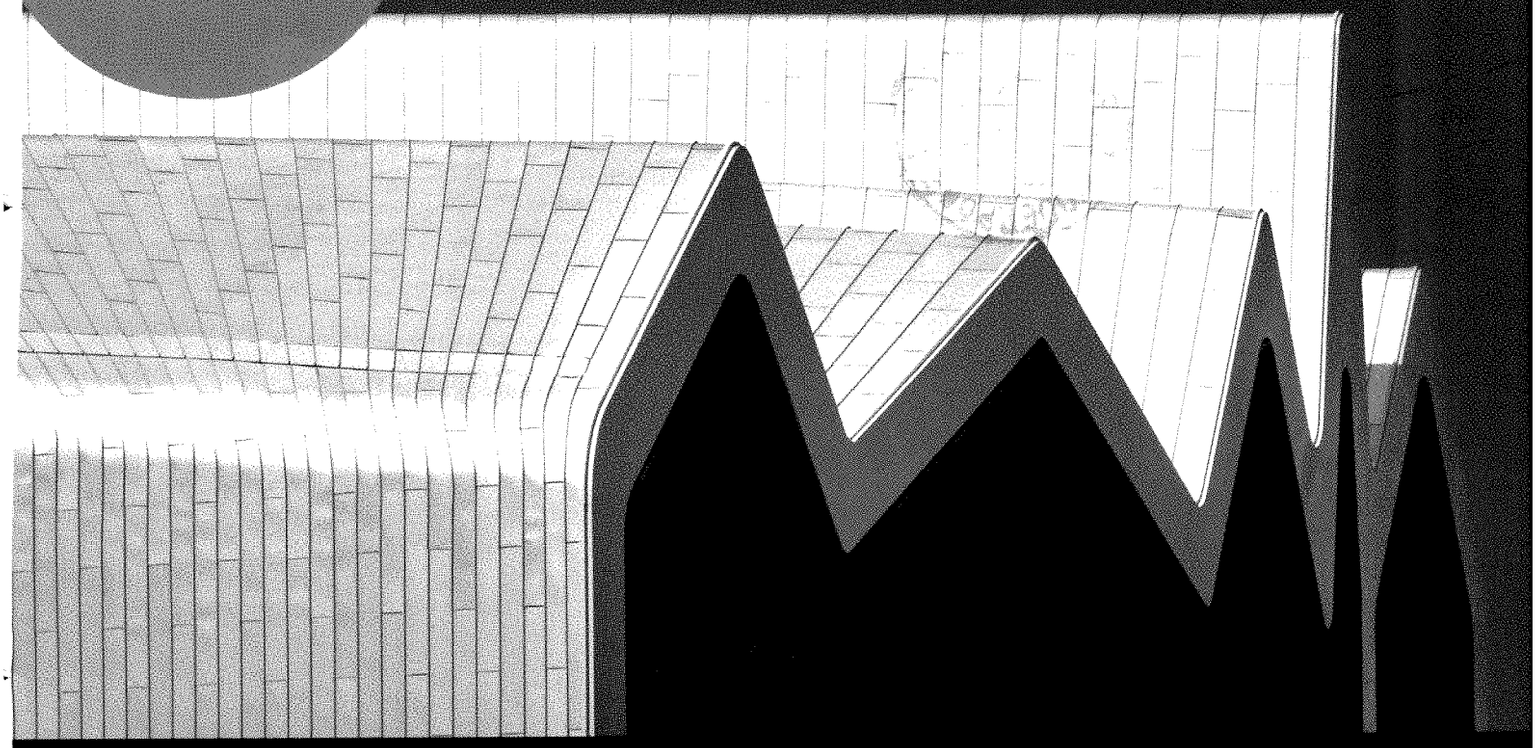

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Design Esterson Associates
Printed by Wyndeham Roche Limited
Subscription rates £105 UK; £160 overseas
Contributors David Anderson, Odin Biddulph, Tim Bryan, Sally Colvin, Maurice Davies, Louise Gray, Oliver Green, Gareth Harris, Felicity Heywood, John Holt, Geraldine Kendall, Maev Kennedy, Nicky Ryan Sara Selwood, Patrick Steel

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Editorial 020 7426 6920
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Museums Journal is published by the Museums Association (reg charity no 313024) and is editorially independent. Nothing should be taken to be the view of the MA unless stated. Museums Journal strives to avoid inaccuracies: if readers have a query or complaint they should contact the editor. Anyone who would like to contribute an article to Museums Journal is asked to first contact the editor.
ISSN 0-027-416-X

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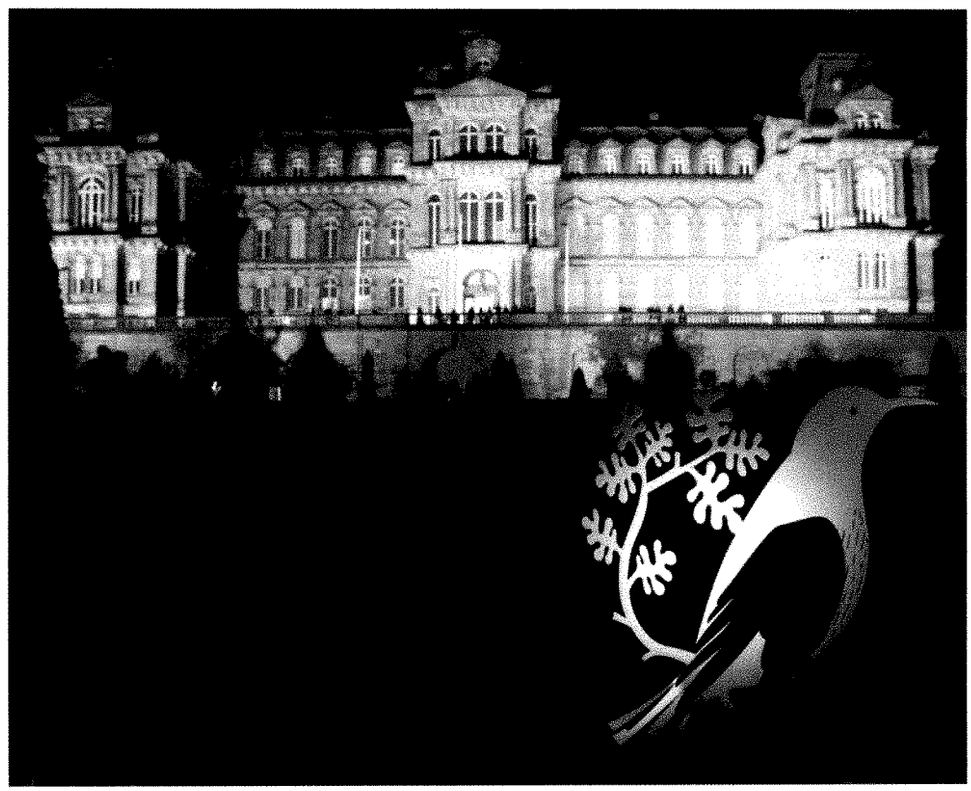

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Editorial
Little England is getting left behind

It's been a while since there has been any discussion about a national museum strategy – in England, that is. But while museums in England have been nervously preoccupied with the transfer of responsibilities from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to Arts Council England (ACE), strategies elsewhere in the UK abound.

Wales launched its strategy more than a year ago, the Museums Policy for Northern Ireland was published earlier this year, and last month Scotland launched a consultation on its draft strategy (see news, p5).

The three strategies differ to take into account the circumstances of the country of origin, but they have some things in common, specifically a commitment to public benefit, access, education and collections care.

The Welsh and Northern Irish strategies go beyond platitudes: the Museums Policy for Northern Ireland has a section entitled Turning Words into Action, with specific targets; and the Welsh strategy has action points after each of its strategic objectives.

It is interesting to note that the three strategies apply to all publicly funded museums. There are no get-out clauses where certain museums are allowed to carry on with their business as if a national strategy didn't exist.

'Maybe after the dust settles on the new Renaissance, thoughts will turn to what England needs in the way of a strategy'

Maybe after the dust settles on the new Renaissance, thoughts will turn to what England needs in the way of a strategy. ACE says it will continue an informal consultation on post-2015 spending plans next year, but we seem to be heading towards a single funding pot for all art forms, guided by its Achieving Great Art for Everyone vision and goals.

But it's not a strategy. So there is nothing to stop museums in England and the bodies that represent them taking a leaf out of their neighbours' books and creating one of their own.

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
sharon@museumsassociation.org
www.twitter.com/sharonheal
www.museumsassociation.org/cuts

● For details of the Come on England! and the National Strategy for Scotland Consultation sessions at the MA conference in Brighton, on 3-4 October, go to www.museumsassociation.org

British Film Institute in negotiations over leasing space at Shell Centre

Spokesman says talks are not about storage of the institute's collection

Gareth Harris

The British Film Institute (BFI) on London's South Bank has confirmed that it is in talks about leasing part of the nearby Shell Centre.

The BFI declined to comment on its plans for the proposed space, which overlooks the Thames, but a BFI spokesman said "the discussions are not about collection storage".

Earlier this year, the BFI closed its South Bank exhibition gallery because of a 15% cut in real terms to the film organisation's grant-in-aid over the next four years.

The BFI closed its South Bank exhibition gallery earlier this year

The 27-storey landmark Shell Centre, built in 1961, is the UK headquarters of the eponymous energy conglomerate.

A Shell spokesman declined to comment on the BFI project.

In July, Shell announced that the Canary Wharf Group and Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company had agreed to redevelop the Shell Centre site.

The mixed-used, £300m redevelopment will comprise office, retail and residential spaces around the central tower, which Shell will continue to occupy.

New threat to collections at Wedgwood Museum

Potteries museum may have to sell collections to cover high court costs even if it wins its case

Patrick Steel

The Wedgwood Museum may have to sell items from its collections even if it wins its high court battle to keep the collection in Stoke-on-Trent, according to administrators.

At a three-day high court hearing last month, the museum argued that the collection had permanent endowment status and therefore should not be sold to meet a £134m shortfall in a pension scheme of which five of its employees were members.

Judgment was reserved and is expected to be delivered within the next few months.

But Bob Young, senior partner at administrator Begbies Traynor, said that a Berkeley Applegate Order meant that the museum could sell items if it had to cover its costs, raising the possibility that even if the museum won, it might still have to sell items from its collections.

The museum's collections have been valued at £20m

"The judge would rule who has to pay," he said. "But if that should be necessary, the trust would have to raise funds, or the bottom line is that it would have to sell [from the collections]."

Bruce Tattersall, a former curator of the Wedgwood Museum, was despondent about the outcome of the hearing.

"I don't think the museum has much chance and I'm not optimistic that the government will try to rescue it in the current financial climate," he said.

"It would be a huge loss and would mean the collection would probably go to the US.

"It is a disaster, but in a sense, it is a disaster that the museum has brought on itself."

The museum collections have been valued at £20m and include two of only four existing first-day vases made at the Wedgwood factory in Etruria in 1769.

WORHEAL

Public consultation on Scots strategy launched

MGS seeks views from museums and galleries by 16 November

Sharon Heal

A public consultation on a national strategy for Scotland's museums was launched last month.

The consultation, which was opened at Museums Galleries Scotland's (MGS) Collaborating to Compete conference in Edinburgh, invites views from Scottish museums and galleries on the national strategy's direction.

The consultation ends on 16 November and MGS is committed to publishing a final strategy early next year.

After that MGS will become the national development body in charge of delivering the strategy.

Chairwoman Fiona Ballantyne said the new body would be structured to take the strategy forward.

"We see it as a progression," she said. "We have put the strategy out to consultation, we'll get feedback, and once that has happened we'll have a clear sense of the shape of the strategy. That's a good point at which to see what a new body would look like."

The National Museum of Scotland reopened in July

The new body will be an independent charity, not a non-departmental government body.

"We need to know by 1 April what we are going to do and how we are going to do it," said Ballantyne. "We're not setting up a totally new body, so there is continuity. It will use the MGS structure."

The consultation document sets out the context, guiding principles and themes for the strategy.

Asked if she thought the consultation would lead to radical changes to objectives, Ballantyne said: "We hope that we have got the building blocks broadly right, but we are open-minded."

It is thought likely that the new body will not be a membership organisation.

Joanne Orr, chief executive of MGS, said: "Our governance model needs to change. We have to modernise." She added that the strategy would apply to all museums. "Everyone has got something to contribute to the delivery of the strategy."

Consultation events will take place at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, on 14 October, and Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, on 2 November.

● The Museums Association is asking its members to contribute to its response to the consultation.
http://mus.ms/mTwPuK

Museums welcome revamped Renaissance scheme

New £20m programme is preferred to old model

Rebecca Atkinson

Arts Council England's (ACE) new Renaissance major grants programme, which launched last month, has been broadly welcomed by the sector.

The £20m funding scheme, which will run from 2012-2015, will award grants of between £500,000 and £2m to regional museums in England.

Individual or consortia of accredited museums with designated collections and an annual attendance of at least 150,000 will be eligible to apply.

The scheme replaces the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's core museum concept. It will run alongside a strategic support fund providing transitional backing for museums that don't receive major grants or other development funding.

A poll on the Museums Association website found that most voters thought the new Renaissance scheme was better than the old model.

Tony Butler, director of the Museum of East Anglian Life, said: "The core museum model would have straitjacketed the sector and created big and almost independent organisations that wouldn't necessarily have any impetus to change."

Tony Butler: "The core museum model would have straitjacketed the sector"

Nick Merriman, director of the Manchester Museum, said: "ACE has listened to museums and avoided changing Renaissance so radically as to destabilise the sector. People will be disappointed that the application process isn't totally open, but Renaissance was never supposed to fund the entire sector."

In brief

Art Fund Prize opens

The call for entries for the Art Fund Prize for 2012 will open on 3 October. The £100,000 prize is open to new museums, exhibitions and projects. This year it was won by the British Museum's History of the World project (above). Applications and eligibility guidelines will be available on the Art Fund's website.

Museums fund fellowship

A consortium of the British Museum, Imperial War Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum has funded a new fellowship on the Clore Leadership programme. The first recipient is Rachel Knight, head of exhibitions at the Imperial War Museum North. Further fellowships have been awarded to Tonya Nelson, museum manager at London's Petrie Museum, and Georgina Young, strategy programme manager at the Museum of London Docklands.

Advocacy report launched

The advocacy document, Why Art Matters – the Value of Contemporary Visual Arts in Lancashire and Cumbria, was launched last month. The document is a summary of a study commissioned by North by NorthWest, a consortium of 12 visual arts organisations. *www.nbynw.squarespace.com*

Tate Modern extension

The first phase of the Tate Modern's extension will open next summer. About 70% of the £215m cost has been raised and the second phase of the development is expected to be completed by 2016 at the latest. Tate also wants to extend its St Ives site, but a gallery spokeswoman said full funding had not been secured. Work began on a £45m redevelopment of Tate Britain, in London, earlier this year.

Fool's gold: slavery museum hosts exhibition on exploitation of Uzbek cotton workers

An exhibition has opened at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum that highlights forced labour and human rights abuses in the cotton industry. White Gold: the True Cost of Cotton tells how Uzbekistan, one of the world's largest exporters of cotton, forcibly conscripts hundreds of thousands of its citizens, including young children, to work in the industry. The exhibition, which features photos of Uzbek cotton workers, explores how the supply chain operates and how consumers can make a difference. White Gold runs until 2 September 2012. The Federation of International Human Rights Museums conference is being held in Liverpool from 10-13 October.

Tate suffers activities fall

Number of participants in organised activities dropped 25% in 2010-11

Patrick Steel

The number of adults participating in Tate's on-site organised activities fell 25% in 2010-11, while the number of children dropped by 36%.

The organisation's annual report put the decline down to "the loss of corporate funding for a number of programmes, and to a review of the learning division that took place during the year and affected staffing capacity in the team relative to previous years".

Corporate funding for learning programmes fell by 28% last year, while the merger of Tate Britain and Tate Modern's learning teams led to the loss of six positions.

A spokeswoman said the figures had also been affected by the building work caused by the redesign of Tate Modern's Clore Learning Centre.

ACE in new approach to diversity

Creative Case highlights that diversity is an integral part of the artistic process

Gareth Harris

Arts Council England (ACE) has launched Creative Case, its "new and different approach to diversity and equality in the arts".

"Creative Case is based upon the simple observation that diversity, in the widest sense, is an integral part of the artistic process. It is an important element in the dynamic that drives art forward, that innovates it and brings it closer to a profound dialogue with contemporary society," according to an ACE statement.

ACE teamed up with visual arts organisation Third Text in 2009 to explore issues around diversity. The partnership produced a book in 2010, Beyond Cultural Diversity: the Case for Creativity, which has informed ACE's initiative.

Another Country by Community Arts North West is part of the ACE Decibel showcase that promotes diverse arts practice

The Creative Case approach consists of three strands: equality; recognition, which means putting "diverse artists, both historically and theoretically, at the centre of British art"; and a New Vision, where diversity becomes "part of the fabric of our discussions".

"It's great to see ACE taking a renewed interest in diversity," said Maurice Davies, head of policy and communication at the Museums Association.

"I hope that, as part of this, they will continue the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's commitment to museum workforce diversity."

ACE has said that it hopes the organisations and artists it funds will share their resources, knowledge and experience with artists and companies from "diverse backgrounds".

Creative Case was launched at a symposium in Manchester last month. Speakers included the BBC's head of diversity, Sue Caro, and Deborah Shaw, the Royal Shakespeare Company's associate director.

SHIRLANE FORREST

Admission fee leads to drop in visitors to NMM

One-third drop in visitors following introduction of a £10 entrance charge

Patrick Steel

Figures released last month by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport reveal that the National Maritime Museum (NMM) saw a drastic drop in visits following the introduction of charges for the Royal Observatory's Meridian Line in March.

The figures show a total of 470,800 people visited the NMM in the first quarter of this financial year, compared with 706,952 people over the same period in 2010.

A £10 entrance fee was introduced for the Meridian Line courtyard and Flamsteed House galleries on 8 March.

A spokesman for the museum said: "Our visitor figures include the National Maritime Museum, Queen's House and Royal Observatory Greenwich. In March, we introduced an adult admission charge for part of the Royal Observatory site and, as we anticipated, this has had some impact on visitor numbers.

"In addition to this, the construction of the venue for the Olympic equestrian test event in Greenwich Park, which began in May, temporarily made access to the observatory more difficult, and may also have had some negative effect."

Introducing an entrance fee has generated £521,000 for the National Maritime Museum

Revenue from the entrance fee over the same period came to £521,000, after the deduction of VAT.

Gloucester City Council's Folk Museum has also suffered a fall in visitor numbers since introducing charges in April. The museum welcomed 10,647 visitors between 1 April and 8 September, compared with 13,206 visitors over the same period last year. The museum's income, however, has risen by £21,722.52.

The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum in Bournemouth finishes a pilot charging scheme this month, which has involved the museum charging a £5 entrance fee since 6 July. The museum would not reveal the preliminary results of the pilot, but Museums Journal understands that visitor numbers have fallen over the period.

VisitEngland's Annual Visitor Attractions Survey found that admissions across England rose by 3% in 2010. Underlying this was a 6% increase for free attractions, compared with a 1% decline for charging attractions.

● Visitors have been flocking to new museums. The National Museum of Scotland has attracted 551,588 visitors since reopening on 29 July, while the Museum of Liverpool has welcomed more than 400,000 visitors since opening on 19 July. The City Museum and Art Gallery in Gloucester has been visited by 5,866 people since reopening this summer – 4.8% up on the same period last year, despite the introduction of a £3 entrance charge.

Police still seek item stolen from Barbican in May

Reward offered for glass brick that formed part of Matta-Clark sculpture

Gareth Harris

Police were still searching for a major work by the late US conceptual artist Gordon Matta-Clark, stolen from the Barbican gallery in London in May, as Museums Journal went to press.

The item was one of seven melted glass bricks that formed part of the artist's 1970-71 sculpture, Glass Plant: Garbage Bricks, which featured in the exhibition, Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, New York 1970s.

The piece, on loan from an anonymous private collector, was taken on 22 May – the final day of the exhibition.

The melted glass brick was on loan from a private collector

A Barbican spokeswoman said that appropriate security measures had been in place.

The gallery is offering a reward for information leading to the recovery of the work, which was insured. "The amount would depend on the type of information received," said the spokeswoman.

Lydia Yee, the exhibition's curator, reportedly said that the theft had "caused a lot of people grief".

In brief

Funds seek trustees

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) are seeking trustees and committee members. Four trustees are wanted for the NHMF/HLF board and 13 members to join seven committees across England. More details can be found on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's website. The closing date is 17 October.

Bletchley school initiative

Bletchley Park Trust last month launched a pilot scheme seeking volunteer software developers from industry to support school teachers who would like to learn computer programming. A summit of software developers, employers and teachers met at the museum to discuss where the next generation of computer programmers would come from. The Teacher-Practitioner Exchange programme will run until June 2012.

Liverpool Biennial dates

The Liverpool Biennial has announced a new director and its dates for next year. The festival's new artistic director and chief executive is Sally Tallant, who is head of programmes at the Serpentine Gallery, London. The biennial takes place from 15 September to 25 November.

Family workshops day

Kids in Museums is running day-long Family Fortunes workshops on how museums can attract more families. It will include sessions from VisitEngland, the British Museum and the Oxford Museum of Natural History. It is being held at the Jewish Museum, London, on 29 November. Kids in Museums has also teamed up with the Children's Commissioner to run Takeover Day in museums on 11 November. *www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk*

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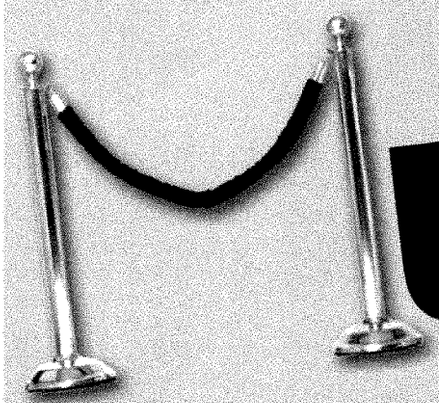

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Museums criticise plan to boost lifetime donations

Disappointment that government's tax relief proposal cap is too low

Geraldine Kendall

Museum and gallery organisations have criticised the small print in the government's proposed tax incentive scheme to encourage more donations of objects and works of art.

The scheme will allow living donors to receive tax relief in the year of their donation based on a percentage of the gift's value – initially fixed at 25%.

Despite welcoming the proposal as a whole, several organisations responding to a HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) consultation, which closed last month, expressed disappointment that the incentive would share its annual tax relief limit with the existing Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme, which offers inheritance tax discounts in exchange for bequests.

Under HMRC's plans, the AIL's tax relief cap of £20m will not rise to accommodate the living donor incentive.

The NMDC said a shared limit would lead to conflict between the two schemes

National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC) spokeswoman Lizzie Glithero-West said a shared limit would lead to "inevitable conflict" between the two schemes.

The Art Fund pointed out that offers to the AIL scheme this year had already reached a tax relief value of £37m, far exceeding the existing limit.

In addition, Glithero-West said that, while the AIL cap is only a nominal figure, the proposals indicated that under the new scheme, it will be treated as a fixed limit that cannot be exceeded.

The Museums Association (MA) argued that donors could be discouraged and valuable works lost to the nation if the cap is not raised.

In addition, the MA, Art Fund and the NMDC all criticised the government's proposal that donated works should be owned by the nation and loaned to recipient museums. This contrasts with the AIL scheme, under which recipient museums gain full ownership.

The MA's head of policy and communication, Maurice Davies, said the proposed approach would cause "unnecessary complexity and continuing bureaucracy and transaction costs". The NMDC said it would discourage donors and institutions from establishing "close and trusting relationships".

V&A teams up with BBC for decorative-arts shows

Handmade in Britain series to air this autumn

Gareth Harris

London's Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) has teamed up with the BBC to produce what has been described as the "most ambitious exploration of decorative arts ever to be undertaken on British television".

Drawing on key objects in the V&A's collection, the BBC Four initiative, Handmade in Britain, comprises three three-part series and a range of hour-long films.

The partnership begins this autumn with a series on ceramics and two one-hour programmes on stained glass and Chinese porcelain, with the latter episode throwing new light on the development of the UK ceramics industry in the 18th century.

Contributors will include a selection of V&A curators, ceramic artists Grayson Perry and Edmund de Waal, and collectors such as David Attenborough.

Iain Millar, media correspondent for the Art Newspaper, said: "If Handmade in Britain can be as smart and successful as A History of the World in 100 Objects, the BBC's high-profile collaboration with the British Museum, there will be little doubt as to the quality of the programmes.

Handmade in Britain will focus on items from the V&A's collection

"However, given that there is already speculation on the future of BBC Four, at least in its present format, one can only hope that this is a signal of intent from the BBC that the standard of the channel's output will remain high and the content original."

Special codes displayed at the V&A alongside objects featured in the series will allow visitors to access the Handmade in Britain website through their smartphones.

Funding news

A bit of Ruffer

The Art Fund launched the **Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grants** scheme last month. The initiative, which aims to help curators maintain and develop their specialist knowledge and expertise, will award grants totalling **£50,000 per annum** for five years.

The grants are designed to give **curators greater opportunities to travel and pursue research,** so that they can better support the development of their museums' collections. They are open to those who work with fine and applied art collections in museums and galleries that hold at least provisional accreditation and are open to the public.

Applications will open on 3 October. There are two categories of grant: up to £2,000 and more than £2,000.

The Art Fund has also announced five projects that will get a share of **£600,000** in funding for new collections under its **Renew** initiative. The recipients are Glasgow Museums; the University of Durham Oriental Museum; Wolverhampton Art Gallery in partnership with the Imperial War Museum London; York Art Gallery; and Cambridge University's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

The Renew scheme is supported by a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (EFF), as part of its 50th birthday celebrations.

The EFF is also involved in a funding scheme, managed by the Museums Association, to increase the use of, access to and knowledge of collections. The **Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund** awards grants of £20,000-£50,000 and the next deadline for application is 31 October.

In the last round, seven projects shared £413,000.

www.artfund.org
www.museumsassocation.org

Simon Stephens

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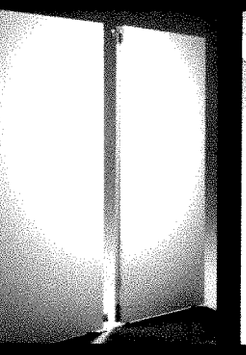

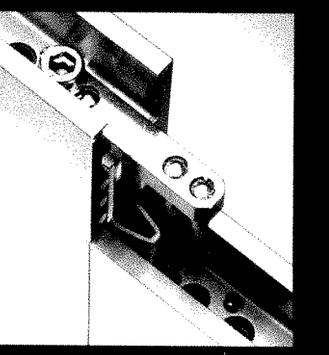

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WORLDWIDE

A blast from the past: National Media Museum hosts Daniel Meadows photo exhibition

A retrospective of works by UK photographer Daniel Meadows that reflects working-class life in Britain in the 1970s opens this month at the National Media Museum in Bradford. The show includes a selection of images from The Shop on Graeme Street series (1972), which features residents from the Moss Side area of Manchester. A joint project from 1972 with photographer Martin Parr, Butlin's by the Sea (pictured), captures life at the holiday camp in Filey, North Yorkshire. The show, which runs until 19 February, forms part of new photography festival, Ways of Looking.

Armouries £1m payout

Redundancy costs for 56 staff top £1m mark

Patrick Steel

The Royal Armouries was forced to pay out more than £1m in redundancy costs in 2010-11, making 56 employees redundant at an average cost of almost £18,000 a head.

The costs of the redundancies were more than a quarter of the museum's salary costs for the year, and about an eighth of its grant-in-aid.

A spokeswoman for the museum said: "We had to make all of the redundancies in year one due to the cuts imposed by the government. Most of the redundancies were voluntary."

Among the redundancies were the Leeds museum's education team, as well as its horse riders, actors and stable staff.

The museum is currently implementing a review to reduce spending by £3.4m over four years.

Imperial War Museum could sell 15 aircraft

Review finds several aircraft are duplicates, non-core or in disrepair

Patrick Steel

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) is consulting on the disposal of 15 aircraft as part of its five-year-long collections review.

The organisation will give the first option on the aircraft, some of which are being offered as gifts and others for sale, to accredited UK museums. The IWM may subsequently consider other organisations, international institutions and the open market.

Curator Emily Dodd, who is heading the collections review at the IWM, said 15 aircraft had been found to be either outside the core collection, duplicates or in poor condition.

A Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15 is one of the 15 aircraft potentially up for disposal

Under The Imperial War Museum Act 1920, the IWM's board has wider powers of disposal than many other national museums. But Dodd said that following the consultation, which runs until the end of this month, all items under consideration would first have to be approved by the trustees of the IWM and then by the culture secretary.

The museum has recommended that trustees take into account the long-term interests of the individual items.

Sally Colvin, the Museums Association's collections coordinator, said: "The process for the IWM's disposal is admirably transparent. The museum followed a rigorous process to start making decisions.

"Importantly, it is a curatorial process, reviewing each collection in turn to look at what is significant, coming up with candidate disposal items, then consulting on their disposal.

"It is good that they are being so open about the process, using Museums Journal and Find an Object online to discuss the disposals and giving other museums a chance to feed into what they are doing."
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Audience development agencies consider merger

National organisation called Audiences Plus could be in place by 2013

Rebecca Atkinson

England's eight audience development agencies are in talks about a possible merger to establish a new national organisation by April 2013.

The proposal is being spearheaded by Audiences London and All About Audiences in the north of England. It has been endorsed by the board of Audiences UK, the network of audience development agencies.

The national agency has provisionally been titled Audiences Plus.

Anne Torreggiani, chief executive of Audiences London, said negotiations were ongoing with all of England's agencies.

Audiences London is also in "advanced talks" with Audiences South West about a possible merger.

MUSEUM OF LONDON

Audience development strategies could soon be centrally run

Audience development agencies lost out when Arts Council England (ACE) announced its new national portfolio funding in April; none of the seven agencies in England that had been receiving ACE funding under the regularly funded organisations system were given national portfolio status.

Torreggiani said the proposal to create a national agency would help address the loss of ACE funding by pooling expertise and making back-office savings.

"The long-term plan is to retain local values that each agency brings and to have a network of local agents who report to offices in London and Manchester," she added.

All About Audiences chief executive Ivan Wadeson said: "Audiences Plus will build on best practice from individual audience development agencies and Audiences UK to evolve a range of nationally available products and services to encourage and deliver excellence in public engagement."

Warning over London 2012

Museums must abide by brand guidelines

Rebecca Atkinson

Museums planning events linked to next year's Olympics have been warned to be aware of the strict guidelines around using the London 2012 brand.

A thread on the Group for Education in Museums email list warned members about the "draconian rules" surrounding the Olympics brand. Protected words and phrases include "Olympic", "Olympiad" and "London 2012". Organisations are also restricted from using the Olympic and Paralympic symbols, the Olympic motto "citius altius fortius" and the London 2012 mascots.

The London 2012 website states it has an "obligation to protect and maintain the current commercial value of the London 2012 brand".

A spokesman said bodies wanting to use the brand would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

www.london2012.com/about-us/our-brand/using-the-brand.php

World news digest

Libya: Unesco director-general Irina Bokova has said that international museums should avoid buying objects from Libya for fear that they may have been looted from ancient sites during the recent unrest. There are five World Heritage sites in Libya, including the Roman city of Leptis Magna.

Netherlands: The Netherlands Museums Association will vote at a meeting next month on whether to suspend the Gouda-based Museumgouda following its decision to sell Marlene Dumas's painting The Schoolboys, in June, after the city cut the institution's funding by 50%. Rotterdam's Wereldmuseum also plans to sell its African and American collections (see news analysis, p15).

Spain: The Reina Sofía modern art museum in Madrid hopes to attract more private funding after a law passed last May by the Spanish council of ministers gave the institution a new legal status. Meanwhile, La Caixa bank has extended its sponsorship of the Prado museum for another four years in a deal worth €2.5m.

Sweden: The Stockholm-based photography museum Fotografiska said it had been forced to censor images by Robert Mapplethorpe on its Facebook page, as the social media giant had previously deleted photographs by the late US photographer from its site. The nude works have blue rectangles placed over potentially offensive areas.

Turkey: The Turkish government has asked the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) to return a 1,700-year-old life-sized marble carving of a child's head, which was removed from Anatolia in 1882 by the archaeologist Sir Charles Wilson. It was attached to a third-century Sidamara Sarcophagus tomb. The V&A "is considering the request seriously", a spokeswoman said.

US: A major project made up of 60 exhibitions across southern California focusing on the post-war Los Angeles art scene, Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980, launches this month. The scheme, co-initiated by the Getty Research Institute, includes shows at the Santa Monica Museum of Art and Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Asco's Instant Mural will feature in Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980

US: The Museum of Fine Arts Boston opened its $12.5m Linde Family Wing for contemporary art last month. The seven galleries house more than 200 works by artists such as Kara Walker and Andy Warhol.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, the Independent, Reuters and BBC

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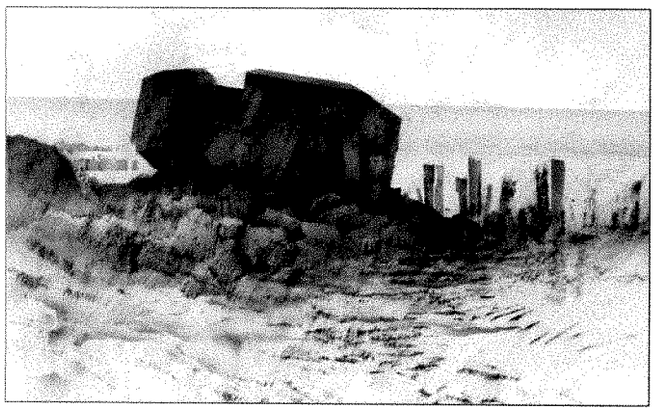

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Note: Forthcoming sellling exhibition: "Robert Perry NEW WORK 2011" RBSA Gallery, Birmingham. 0121 236 4353. 7-19 November 2011

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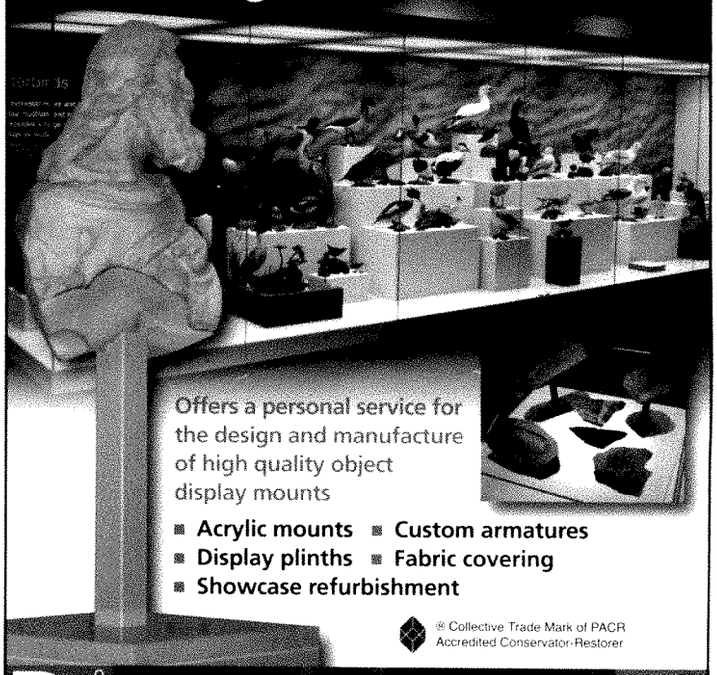

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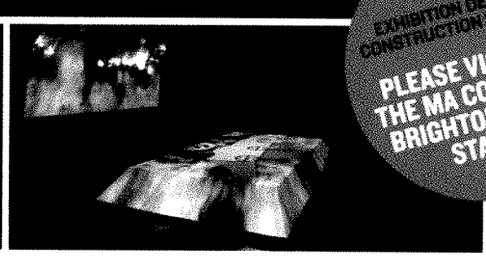

Disposing the question

With a wide disparity between attitudes towards disposals, is it time for pan-European guidelines?

Geraldine Kendall and Patrick Steel

Four years ago this month, Museums Association (MA) members voted to relax the UK sector's policy on disposal, allowing museums for the first time – and only in exceptional circumstances – to dispose of items from outside their core collections for financial reasons.

At the time, the debate elicited strong views, and a recent MA poll showed that the issue still arouses contention, with nearly a third of respondents voting that they'd like to see the code of ethics tightened again.

Museums in the UK are, however, ahead of the game when it comes to talking constructively about disposal.

Cultural policy adviser Peter Davies, who has written a book on the issue, says that having spent the past decade interrogating its ethical guidelines, the UK sector is now being held up as a model by countries that are only just beginning to consider disposal as a collections management tool, but remain anxious to safeguard against irresponsible sale.

A meeting held by the Network of European Museum Organisations (Nemo) last month to discuss financially motivated disposal revealed a wide disparity in attitudes between policy-makers. Countries such as Italy, Belgium and Spain take a strong ethical and legal stance against any deaccessioning of publicly held collections. Others, such as Slovenia, have yet to start a conversation on the issue.

At the meeting, some representatives expressed a reluctance to instigate further debate, fearing that there might be no turning back once the floodgates are opened. But disposal ethics are gaining urgency against a backdrop of financial turmoil across the EU.

Marlene Dumas's The Schoolboys was sold by the Museumgouda to stave off potential bankruptcy

As Museums Journal reported last month, several recent cases have highlighted the phenomenon of museums trying to sell from collections to offset funding cuts.

In the Netherlands, Rotterdam's ethnographic Wereldmuseum prompted a public outcry earlier this year by announcing its intention to sell off its entire collection of African and American artefacts in order to focus on Asian art. The museum said the move would insure its future against economic instability and an impending €200m cut to arts subsidies, and claimed that the country was already well served by other African collections.

Meanwhile, Museumgouda, a city history museum in the western Netherlands, may be expelled from the Netherlands Museum Association (NMV) after it sold The Schoolboys, a painting by South African artist Marlene Dumas, for €1.3m in a private auction last month to stave off potential bankruptcy.

The Netherlands has been historically accepting of deaccessioning, but its ethical guidelines require museums to draw up a collection plan to justify disposals, ensure public institutions have a chance to acquire them ahead of private buyers, and spend any revenue only on the collections – measures that Museumgouda failed to carry out.

The museum argued that the Dumas sale was an emergency measure justified because the work was no longer part of its core collection. A final vote on Museumgouda's NMV membership is due next month. As in the UK, being expelled from the association has no direct financial impact but can affect a museum's credibility and influence future funding decisions.

In Austria, where disposal practice is not a major priority, the Austrian Museums Association is debating the case of a city museum that sold 10 paintings gifted to it. And although deaccessioning remains rare in Germany, the German Museums Association recently judged one museum's financially motivated disposal to be against its rules. Although the country's museum policy is generally created at a regional level, a national paper on deaccessioning is due out this year.

Some policy-makers think it would make sense to formulate Europe-wide guidelines. The Nemo meeting, according to MA policy and communication head Maurice Davies, concluded that it would be impossible to reach consensus when so many nations have yet to fully explore the issue, and those that have hold diverse opinions.

A fellowship at the MA, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), is to undertake a comparative study of international ethics around the sale of collections, as well as analysing disposal cases that have taken place in the UK since the code of ethics was changed.

The results of the research could shed light on how a more unified approach might be achieved. Given the EU's economic situation, other nations may not be able to shy away from the debate for much longer.

● Information on the MA's code of ethics can be found at: *www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics*

Worldwide practices

US: Deaccessioning is lightly regulated, with trading up of collections not uncommon. The American Association of Museums is regarded as behind the UK in tackling ethical issues.

Canada: A minority of museums have been pioneering disposal practice, but the majority still treat the subject with caution.

Europe: In countries such as Spain, Portugal, France and Italy, disposal is highly restricted and deaccessioning is largely prohibited by law. The UK, the Netherlands and Finland have removed some barriers.

Museums need to make the loans process easier

Sally Colvin

Over the past five years of work on collections at the Museums Association (MA), I've championed increased loans between museums and to other public venues as one of the primary means of improving use of collections.

But even compared with disposal, loans has been a tricky subject on which to find agreement and to see change. Partly, this seems to be about an aversion to risk, but it is made more complicated by the fact that only some museums have the staff, the resources and the most in-demand collections, to have invested in formal loans processes.

Thinking about how we approach risk, the line that often emerges is "museums balance access now with preservation long-term". To my mind, the scales are weighted wrongly. We need to assume the imperative to lend in a range of contexts, and then think about reasonable steps to mitigate risk in doing so. More of us need to accept that less material will be preserved forever – and that's OK.

The second challenge is harder to define because we're talking about a disparity between museums. A museum with a handful of staff might well find the decision-making processes at giant operations incomprehensible. I'm sure that the big lenders get frustrated by a lack of detail behind loan requests. In each case, the budget of the other party must seem implausible. Each side of the loans partnership can do their part – understanding breeds confidence, so provide information; research different options; and work on solutions. Be friendly, as cliched as that sounds.

One application to the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund earlier this year included loan costs (those incurred by the lender, for transport and insurance) of nearly £15,000 for nine objects from a national museum. I find it hard to believe that the standards set in this example were specific to the vulnerability of the objects concerned. Perhaps they did not consider the benefit to the lender of getting material out. I wonder how much the cost of the loan was scrutinised – its size made members of our grant selection panel's eyes widen.

On the other hand, many Effective Collections projects show what real collaboration can do, with some goodwill and creativity. Derby Museum's 1980s living room installation at the Vintage Festival in July proves that objects can travel, and can be displayed with different levels of security so that visitors can interact with objects in ways that don't happen in a museum. Also, with just a £10,000 grant, Dorset County Museum will lend 140 fossil specimens to 14 partner museums. You might argue that the material in my examples isn't comparably significant, but that's the point – standards and costs should be flexible for different loans.

Museums need to appreciate the benefits of lending and borrowing. We need to recognise that loans allow activity, engagement and impact that no other part of museum practice achieves. Loans should be celebrated, and be core to museum activity.

Over the last year we've been working on Smarter Loans to try and tackle some of these issues. A working group drawn from the museum sector (with input from key groups such as UK Registrars Group and the Government Indemnity Scheme team) have set out what it means in practice to be a good lender or borrower. This document is up for consultation on the MA website until 21 October, and I hope readers will take the opportunity to comment. More than this, I hope people will honestly appraise their approach, and adopt Smarter Loans.

Sally Colvin is the collections coordinator at the Museums Association

The diary of a national museum director *Part 16*

A few weeks ago Bullingdon, the minister's special adviser, invited me over to his office (which I noticed had been renamed the "Meeting Zoo") at DCMS for a chat about his next Big Idea.

Suddenly the door swung open. In came a chimp in a dress, pushing a tea trolley. I couldn't hide my surprise. "I know," groaned Bullingdon. "It's come to this. We've got an exchange programme with London Zoo.

"Jeremy's hiding in his office. But Ed's in a cage in Regent's Park, eating bananas, laughing when he soils his nappies and doing tricks for the crowds. There's a sign reading 'Do not feed the sub-human' on the bars, but everyone ignores it. He loves the attention. He doesn't want to come back, but he'll change his tune when winter comes.

"Do you remember that time a few months ago when Labour mocked Jeremy in the Commons and said they wanted the organ grinder not the monkey? Little did they know. The monkey's back as minister. Worst of all, the animals are doing fucking brilliantly."

He took me next door to the "Policy Zoo", a darkened room with thumping house music, illuminated only by strobe lights. Inside, I could just make out an octopus wearing shades in a huge tank. "That's Mystic Mash," said Bullingdon. "Ed chose it personally. If you ask it a question, and pour enough alcohol and Class A in through a tube, it'll choose one of two balls – blue for yes, and red for no."

"Do you mean...?" I asked. "Yes," he replied. "It was the animals who decided that core museums should go, and referred the takeover of BSkyB to the Competition Commission. Both great decisions that Jeremy was too scared to take."

Museums should be campaigning for cultural rights for all

David Anderson

On 3 April this year, there was an international outcry when the Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei was arrested on charges of alleged "economic crimes". London's Tate Modern placed a large sign on its building demanding that China "Release Ai Weiwei". The artist was eventually freed on 22 June.

So is everything OK now? Martin Roth, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, did not think so. He was quoted in Die Zeit saying that Ai is so popular only "because he is constantly pounding the table". But surely the issue of cultural rights should amount to more than campaigns for the release from jail of high-profile artists?

International law is unequivocal in including cultural rights as an essential component in the indivisible body of human rights. Many states, including ours, are signatories to the legally binding 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), but have largely ignored its requirement to take steps to achieve full realisation of the cultural rights of their citizens.

What, then, are cultural rights? Academic and former Unesco deputy director general Rodolfo Stavenhagen has identified three broad concepts of culture embodied in international and inter-governmental frameworks. The first is culture as capital – the accumulated material heritage of mankind, to which people should have basic access. The second concept is culture as creativity, which is usually assumed to apply to leading artists. Stavenhagen's third concept is culture as a total way of life – often assumed to be the sum total of the material and spiritual activities of indigenous peoples.

In practice these definitions ascribe a passive role to citizens in plural democratic societies. A leading US theorist of human rights, Henry Shue, says that to be effective, rights must be founded on meaningful social participation.

Public institutions have a duty to work actively to eliminate inequality of participation. They must also give citizens the opportunity to influence strategies and outcomes. These responsibilities apply as much to their international projects as those carried out at home.

One might expect cultural institutions to press for implementation of CESCR, and encourage the public to demand their cultural rights, but, strangely, they have been silent – fearful, perhaps, that they might be obliged to divert resources from other institutional priorities.

The arrest of Ai might have stimulated critical reflection by the sector on social participation and the realisation of cultural rights. Instead, the public was offered not thought, but feel-good gestures that have passed without trace.

David Anderson is the director general of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

The insider

Welcome to our retail-leisure-museum experience

Maev Kennedy

It is obviously very good news that our planning application for the Founder's Field will just be nodded through, despite the ridiculous suggestion that it's not merely green belt but actually ancient woodland – I always felt the biomass garden was more trouble than it was worth, no matter how well the willow coffins are going in the shop. But now I wonder: are we really thinking big enough?

I can't call the north portico ramp a complete disaster, it really is doing remarkably well as a community skate park and bringing in a whole new demographic, which looks very impressive in our annual report, since we sent out our work experience genius with a clicker to count them all. But I put it to you, since we are already franchising out the shop and cafe to gain level access entry, should we be going ever further?

Our eating experience partner is really excited about the Garum and Dormouse pie. His future planners think it could really have legs and, going forward, can even envisage a small tastefully themed chain in some of our former Renaissance partners' museums. But they have also raised the feasibility of an entire food court here, complete with the Grendel's Mother beer hall, and the King's Kickflip aimed at our valued skaters.

As for the shop, the news there is fascinating. Because of the 500 space car park we can fit onto the rest of the Founder's Field – representing, I have to remind you, a major saving on our grounds maintenance budget – other retailers are apparently clamouring to get in. Embracing the digital age, in the form of a high-end consumer electronics outlet, is just the sort of can-do spirit our Founder would have saluted.

Now obviously this could have implications for our gallery space, both existing and projected. But I have just the faintest glimmer of an idea that could solve our space problems forever, even the Victorian garden shed collection, and the wretched lawn mowers. Call me crazy, but if nobody else wants the High Street – could we have it?

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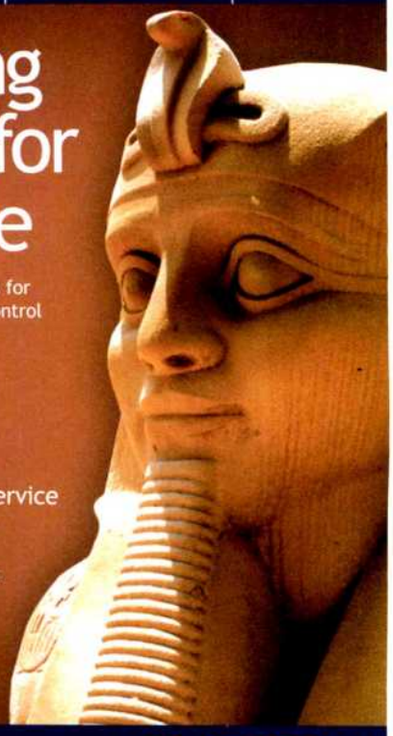

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Overcoming the fear of tackling sensitive issues

Odin Biddulph

An exhibition exploring the history of Broadwater Farm is now on at Bruce Castle Museum in Tottenham, north London. That it is on at all is a testament to the courage of the museum and the council in facing, passively at least, what they fear most: sensitive issues.

No matter what the achievements before or since, talking about the "riot" or "uprising" at Broadwater Farm is highly sensitive from an official point of view.

On the one hand, a policeman was brutally killed, three men wrongly charged for murder were later freed after a massive public campaign, and last year the police reopened their investigation. On the other hand, residents were cruelly treated by the police and stigmatised by the press. There are many old wounds on both sides.

However, while numerous documentaries and studies have been produced, there was a time when, if you walked just five minutes up the road from the estate to the local museum, or browsed the most recent local history books, Broadwater Farm was only represented by a charming black and white photograph of the original ye olde dairy that once stood nearby. This had to change.

It's understandable that council staff may be fearful in an atmosphere when just two days before the exhibition opened at a community centre on the estate, the BBC's Crimewatch aired a very slick episode calling for fresh leads into the killing of PC Blakelock 25 years before.

Walking through the smouldering ruins of Tottenham High Road in the aftermath of the August riots, I selfishly thought about my exhibition and the problems I'd had in trying to promote it through the council. At that stage, I was still no closer to finding out whether they would back an "official" launch for the exhibition while it sat in limbo at the museum in an upper gallery.

The similarities between 1985 and 2011 are so clear that you wonder what would have happened if the museum had seriously engaged with its past. Could Tottenham have avoided the destruction of the present? Instead, the High Road went up in flames and the Independent Police Complaints Commission had to reveal that Mark Duggan had not shot at the police, and a terrible lesson was learned: riots bring change.

While the "riot" of 1985 may have wreaked terrible consequences for the community, it also brought radical change.

It is perhaps this single issue that makes Broadwater Farm's history so uncomfortable from an official point of view and yet so urgent if we are to learn its lessons.

Odin Biddulph is the curator of Broadwater Farm: The Story of a Community 1967-2010 (until March 2012) at Bruce Castle Museum, Tottenham, London. He will be speaking at the Museums Association conference in Brighton.
www.museumsassociation.org/conference
www.broadwaterfarm.info

From where I'm standing

The difference between love and hate

Felicity Heywood

It was a great day last month when I visited two galleries in London. You know those days when everything seems to fall into place?

The meaning that the Ghanaian artist Owusu-Ankomah refers to in his new show Microcron-Kusum (Secret Signs Hidden Meanings) at the October Gallery is love.

The violet-blue canvases involve a male figure among Adinkra symbols – a deep-rooted part of the Akan people's culture that have specific meanings but to outsiders are cloaked in mystery. The male appears to navigate his way through the shapes.

As soon as I walked into the gallery, I recognised the artist who appeared to be giving a tour. Of course I went to join them, but it turns out that his companions were the sculptor Sokari Douglas Camp (who I interviewed for Museums Journal probably 10 years ago) and her family.

Owusu-Ankomah took the time, on my request, for a tour. The message is love, he tells me. Those who fail to love, who embrace negativity will be left behind in the new age to come. That new age is inherent within us, and something we will have to create for ourselves as humanity, he says.

Just down the road at the Petrie Museum that evening was a talk on Flinders Petrie's analysis of racial types of Memphis, ancient Egypt. Less love exuded here.

On offer was a critique of what has become accepted as Egyptology. Using biological, archaeological and linguistic references we were given an alternative view of who the Egyptians were. In the mixed audience there was resistance from some of the white, particularly older, members of the audience. For instance, said the speaker, why could the brown skin colour on tombs not represent an African? Today, Africans have varying shades of skin colour so why do we assume that brown skin means Mediterranean or Arab and that black means Nubian?

Later, on my way home a chance meeting with the Islington Twins (Chuka and Dubem Okonkwo) closed my evening with an existential discussion that brought it full circle back to love.

Over 50s need not apply...

I feel that I have to make some kind of comment regarding what seems to be the current trend in recruitment across the museum and gallery sector.

I was made redundant in November 2010 from my post as curator of a small accredited independent Scottish museum, after seven years of dedicated work. At 55 this was a challenge I could have done without. However, I honestly thought that experience and transferable skills, regardless of age, gender, race, or religion, had equal status in this day and age.

I have applied for over 15 posts since then. I have paid a small fortune to have my cv professionally rewritten. I have had five interviews – all unsuccessful, even though I could tick all the boxes in the person specifications etc. At least three of the interviews, in my opinion, went very well, but I still didn't get the job. I have purchased a book called Brilliant Interview to help with interview questions and protocols. I've even taken professional guidance from the local Skills Centre, all to no avail.

These are all positions that, on paper, I'm qualified or over-qualified to do. I therefore have to conclude that something is prohibiting the interviewing panel from choosing me over the other equally talented, but younger candidates.

My conclusion is that it could possibly be my age. Now at 56 years of age, with 12 years in the heritage sector as a museum manager/curator, combined with a "transferable skill" of 25 years in the field of graphic design, exhibitions, project management, fundraising and publicity to add to the mix, I seem now to be unemployable.

I am all for the younger museum professionals contributing new and fresh ideas. However, it does not help when you see that the successful candidate is a twenty-something, recent university graduate. There needs to be a healthy balance.

Grumpy old man? That I am not. I do not see the value to museums and galleries of taking on too many "fresh to the market" staff in senior roles. Experience has to be gained over years of workplace challenges, understanding the product and how it all fits together.

I am still looking for the impossible: "Museum manager wanted; over 50 and must have experience in museum management, knowledge of Accreditation issues, with a healthy pro-active and hardworking attitude, an understanding of successful branding, interpretation and exhibition design, ability to lead fundraising initiatives, good at lectures, flexible all-rounder who believes museums and galleries should not only be a place of research and learning, but a fun experience, and worth remembering...". I'm here!

I would be interested to know if any other museum professionals have had similar challenges, and/or feel the same about the recruitment bias towards younger candidates.

David Addison, Elgin, Moray

Disposal help

Hilary McGowan praises the 2007 changes to the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics to encourage "desirable deaccessioning" (*Museums Journal September 2011, p17*).

It's perhaps helpful to clarify that the revised code of ethics does in fact permit financially motivated disposal in "exceptional circumstances". Crucially, the item concerned must not be part of the museum's core collection and the disposal must be intended to create significantly increased long-term public benefit from the remaining collection. (There are several additional other conditions that also need to be met.)

This is a difficult and controversial area and the MA is always able to give confidential advice to museums considering financially motivated disposal.

Maurice Davies, head of policy and communication, Museums Association

Cut the courses

Gosh, thanks, Toby Butler (*Museums Journal September 2011, p19*). As an unemployed and qualified former museum officer, I was wondering what to spend my surplus dole money on – keeping a portfolio up-date would seem to be the perfect answer.

Having applied for more than 60 jobs in the museum sector since finishing my last contract, I am aware that it isn't unusual for advertised posts to attract in excess of a 100 applicants – most of us trained and skilled. Isn't it about time institutions such as Toby's realised they've flooded the market and began to prune back the "raft" of courses on offer?

Looking on the bright side, the lecturing staff freed by this would have more time for a spot of up-skilling themselves.

Jane Downham, Haslemere, Surrey

Men sorting bags of parcels

ROYAL MAIL GROUP LTD (RMG) 2011

Equal rights

A session at the Museums Association (MA) conference and exhibition in Brighton (3-4 October) will discuss how recent changes to the Equality Act mean that publicly funded museums have a new obligation to represent the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in their displays. Here are some comments on the issue from the MA website:

It's almost strange to still be talking about doing this, instead of just doing it – it seems so obvious that we should represent all sections of society in our collections and learning work.

Perhaps we could move away from the stereotypes when we represent this area. Maybe we use stereotypes because we are scared gay people are just the same as everybody else – rather normal and pretty average, which doesn't really make for an exciting exhibition.
Anonymous

For me, the salient point is that gay people have a history and one which isn't owned by academics. The longer this isn't acknowledged, the easier it is to discount our existence or attempts to even acknowledge it. The title of the BMAG's exhibition [Queering the Museum] troubles me, to me the label queer remains redolent – at best – either of ranty youth groups or academia. Meanwhile, for many of us, it remains problematic and anything but celebratory.
Steve, development worker, Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust

Clarifications

Museums Journal, September 2011 Fiona Talbott is the correct spelling of the head of museums, libraries and archives at the Heritage Lottery Fund, p21. The credit for the photograph on p29 should have read: Image courtesy of Event Communications, Exhibition Designers. Photographer Graham Butterworth; the caption on p33 should have read: Writer Anthony Browne at Seven Stories in Newcastle upon Tyne.

In the November issue of Museums Journal

- What's the point of being part of a World Heritage Site? By Deborah Mulhearn
- Patrick Henry, the director of the Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool, talks to Simon Stephens about moving to a new venue on the city's waterfront
- Reviews: National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh; Teignmouth and Shaldon Museum, Devon; Roman Frontier Gallery, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle
- Plus news, comment, letters, jobs and much more

www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal

Museum Practice online

- The October issue of Museum Practice will look at the art of exhibition labels, exploring how good text can help audiences, as well as new approaches to labels. Plus practical advice on writing label guidelines and case studies.

www.museumpractice.org

Vox pop

What would you like to see in the national strategy for Scotland?

David Gaimster *director, the Hunterian, Glasgow*

"The economic situation demands we forge a sustainable future for museums and galleries in Scotland, one which harnesses the public value of our collections, knowledge and skills. A national strategy should be a platform to achieve this.

While aiming for consensus the strategy should also exploit the dynamic 'ecology' of nationals, universities, local authority museums and independents.

The key requirement will be effective partnership working. The strategy should identify priorities and key performance indicators in order to evaluate our impact. University museums have a unique position and expertise to lead on research goals, skills and knowledge exchange, and in the training of the next generation of museum leaders."

Rowan Julie Brown *director, National Mining Museum Scotland*

"I would like a strategy that necessitates structural change; challenges inequalities in funding; and assesses the balance between national, local authority and independent provision.

I would expect recognition of our devolved status and an outline of how Scottish cultural institutions fit within the UK framework. I would anticipate the evaluation framework to use the Scottish Government's National Outcomes prioritising public delivery, partnership working and knowledge retention.

I would expect an acknowledgement of the principles and standards that govern museums and case studies on innovative practice. I would like to see a description of the National Development Body including how it will be formed, funded, evaluated and governed."

Frank Little *museums manager, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries*

"'Most of us would agree with the main objectives set out in the strategy and I applaud the ambition, aspiration and vision. What we need now is strong leadership and a commitment to prioritise and deliver. The creation of the new National Development Body provides the chance to create a more robust relationship with government, and to give greater focus and direction for the entire sector.

Some basic issues need to be tackled: a new approach to the distribution of funding across the sector and a move away from short-term unsustainable initiatives; balancing national and local provision along with a review of the Recognition Scheme (an essential but flawed funding stream); and a consistent and transparent approach to funding industrial museums."

Jane Edwards *director, Scottish Maritime Museum*

"I'd like to see the strategy give a clear focus for investment and decision-making. There needs to be prioritisation, both in the final strategy itself and in the work of the new National Development Body. Otherwise there is a danger that the national strategy could end up trying to be all things to all people. The themes of the strategy, for example, are very broad and all-encompassing. This reads well in terms of advocacy, but is it strategic?

In terms of the sustainability of the sector it would be helpful if the strategy could include signposting to funding opportunities (public and private sector) as well as knowledge-sharing.

Lastly, the strategy cannot be written, or read, in isolation from the rest of the cultural sector."

Moving stories

…n visitors flock to the recently opened …rside Museum in Glasgow, *Simon Stephens* …nds out about the challenges of interpreting and displaying transport collections

In many senses, the £74m Riverside Museum in Glasgow is a big leap forward for transport museums. The huge column-free spaces created by architect Zaha Hadid allow the many large objects space to breathe, while the 150 interactives offer a state-of-the-art approach to providing interpretation for the 500,000-plus visitors who have been attracted to the museum since it opened in June.

But the story that the Riverside Museum tells, of the transport, engineering and shipbuilding legacy of the area, is one repeated by many other transport museums in the UK – that of the decline of most of the UK's major car plants and shipyards. Transport manufacturing is still important in the UK, but it is not on the same scale it once was.

How to tell the story of an industry that has undergone dramatic change in recent years is just one of the many challenges that transport museums face. As well as having to bring alive a topic that is all about movement in a static museum environment, curators also often have to balance the needs of transport enthusiasts and general visitors. The objects themselves are large and sometimes awkward to store, while acquiring items can be difficult as they are frequently expensive and the technology moves on very quickly.

The designers of the Riverside Museum have tried to deal with a number of these challenges in order to make transport a compelling and accessible subject for today's visitors.

The Riverside Museum used the same twin criteria of collection significance and visitor interest that led the creation of the displays at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, which reopened in 2006 after a £27.9m redevelopment. But project director Lawrence Fitzgerald, who also worked on Kelvingrove, says the Riverside Museum wanted to avoid some of the specific mistakes of other transport museums.

"Museums of transport have a tendency to be celebratory and also to be inward-looking," Fitzgerald says. "We are celebrating things that we feel are worth it, but the great men of history story is a bit overdone in technology and transport museums."

Fitzgerald says the Riverside Museum also avoids the over-emphasis on the technical side of objects that is often apparent in transport museums. Instead, the focus is on personal stories attached to how the public use and experience transport.

"Even social history museums will just talk about the workers and makers, but most people who visit museums are consumers," he says. "They don't work in transport, so they tend to see transport from the point of view of the end user."

Fitzgerald has also tried to make the displays as flexible as possible, taking advantage of the fact that many transport objects can be moved fairly easily, despite their size.

"We have developed a flexible display system that means that we don't need to wait for the next £20m refurbishment to change things," he says. "Too often in museums you have these big overriding narratives that, as well as boring people rigid, make it impossible to take anything out."

> 'Transport museums have a tendency to be inward-looking'

Getting it right for the various audiences that visit transport museums is a challenge. This is particularly true for Brooklands Museum in Weybridge, Surrey, which claims to be the birthplace of British motorsport and aviation, as well as the home of Concorde. Cycling was also important at Brooklands and this mix has been further complicated by the recent arrival of the London Bus Museum, which is operated by a separate trust, but will be part of the overall offer to visitors.

Brooklands Museum director Allan Winn says: "Right from the early days, one of the tensions was that there were motor-racing enthusiasts who wanted to see this corner of the original race track returned to how it was in 1939 and the aviation enthusiasts who wanted to capture how this site was in the early 1960s when it was building the biggest airliner ever

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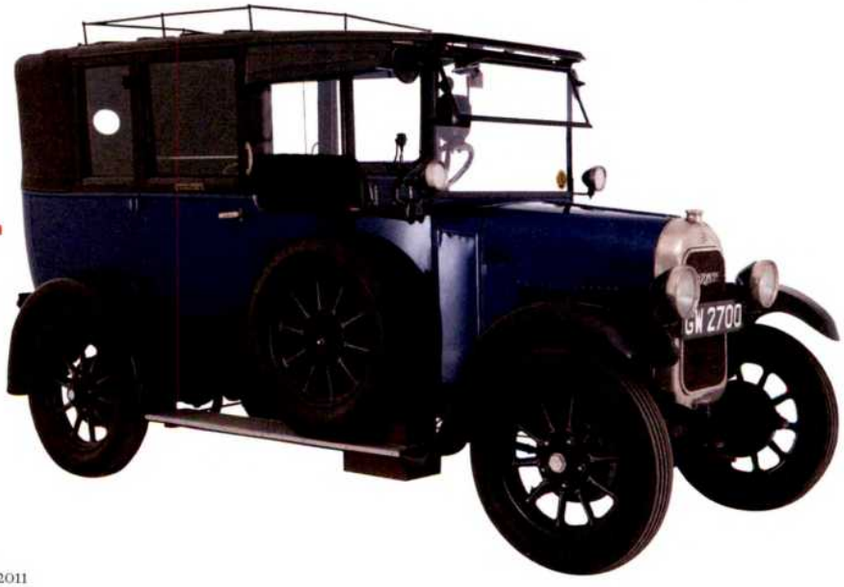


Above right: the National Railway Museum in York had to scrap plans to upgrade its Great Hall. Top right: the Riverside Museum focuses on personal stories to do with transport. Right: a Beardmore taxi from the Riverside Museum

to be put into production in the UK. But as far as we are concerned, these two core areas of motor racing and aviation are inextricably linked on one site."

Brooklands Museum, which opened in 1991, is working on a lottery bid for a redevelopment of the site and one of the aims is to develop a project that caters to these different audiences.

"When we have done audience research here we have found that there are people who have come here because they just want to look at the racing cars or who just want to visit our Concorde, but there is a huge middle ground of people who are looking for a good day out," Winn says. "The enthusiasts know we are here, so it is growing greater numbers in the middle ground that is the focus of everything we do."

The Heritage Motor Centre (HMC) in Gaydon, Warwickshire, is another organisation that has its fair share of enthusiasts but also works hard to attract a more general audience.

"It is a balance, and the enthusiasts can be quite demanding but you don't want to alienate them," says Tim Bryan, the head of collections at the HMC. "We want to attract as many people as possible and part of this is making sure that the displays are as interesting as possible."

Bryan is working on a plan to create a new collections facility that will offer open storage and will enable visitors to see far more of the cars that the museum owns.

Bryan believes his museum, like many other transport museums, is very different from what many people perceive such places to be ▶

Rehabilitating electric trains

Many of the UK's transport museums have their roots in the passions of a few committed enthusiasts. The Electric Railway Museum in Baginton, near Coventry, is one such place.

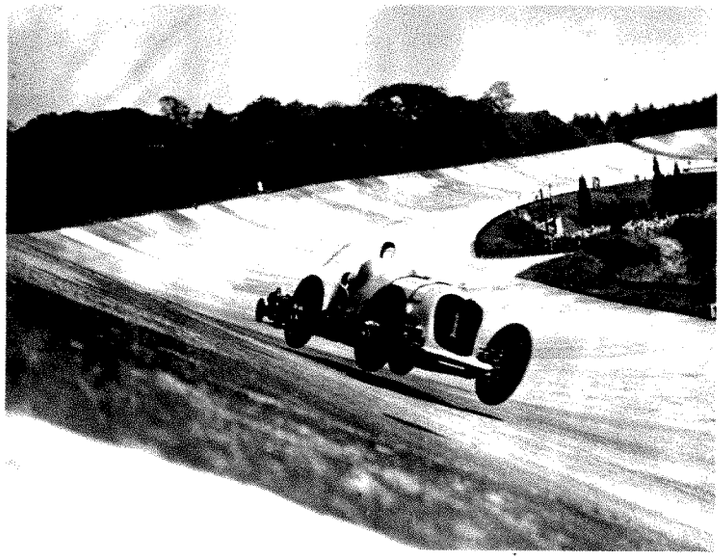
The museum's volunteer team argue that electric railways have a long history, rich in technical innovation and socio-economic impact, yet remain largely marginalised in existing museum collections, where there has been a traditional focus on steam trains. Its aim is to provide the UK with a location where the success and heritage of its electric railways can be recognised. Originally established as the Coventry Steam Railway Centre, the Electric Railway Museum site was taken over by the Suburban Electric Railway Association in 2004.

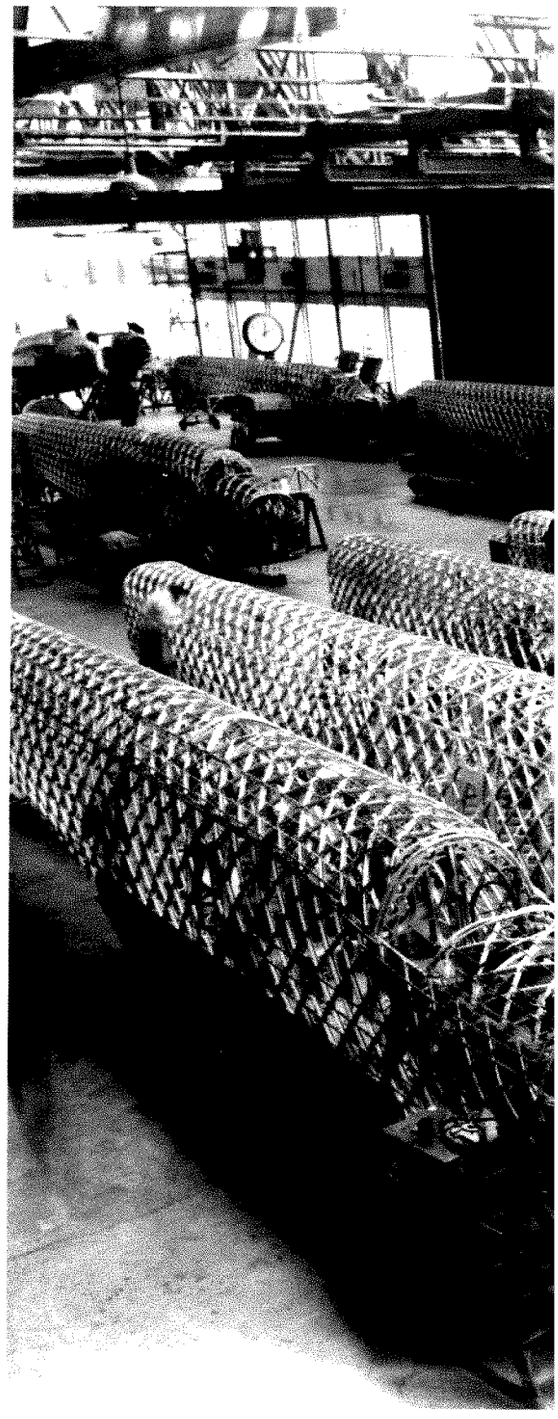
In 2008 plans were put in place that saw the coming together of other nationwide projects involved in electric traction preservation to create a charity with a view to establishing a permanent home for an electric railway museum.

To achieve this, the Electric Railway Museum was created in 2009 as an independent registered charity.

Graeme Gleaves, the chairman of the museum, has secured many of the electric multiple units for preservation, while the organisation's heritage adviser is Richard Gibbon, the former head of engineering and collections at York's National Railway Museum.

The museum is open to the public by prior booking and the site has free open weekends throughout the year that feature various activities and demonstrations. It is all outdoors at the moment, but there are plans for a covered hall to house the railway collection.
www.electricrailwaymuseum.co.uk





Brooklands Museum, Surrey, embraces vintage motorsport (left, John Cobb racing the Napier-Railton car) and aviation (right, Vickers aircraft under construction)

like. Although there are transport museums that still feature rows and rows of vehicles with very little interpretation apart from a few technical details, this is not the norm, particularly among the larger museums.

Many transport museums have realised that they have to move on if they are to attract new audiences. Coventry Transport Museum is a case in point. The city was once the powerhouse of the UK motor industry, but those days are gone following the closure of car plants across the Midlands during the past 30 years or so. Despite this, there is still a lot of pride in Coventry's role in car manufacturing, particularly among those who worked in the factories and associated businesses. But many of the younger generation will be unaware of this history.

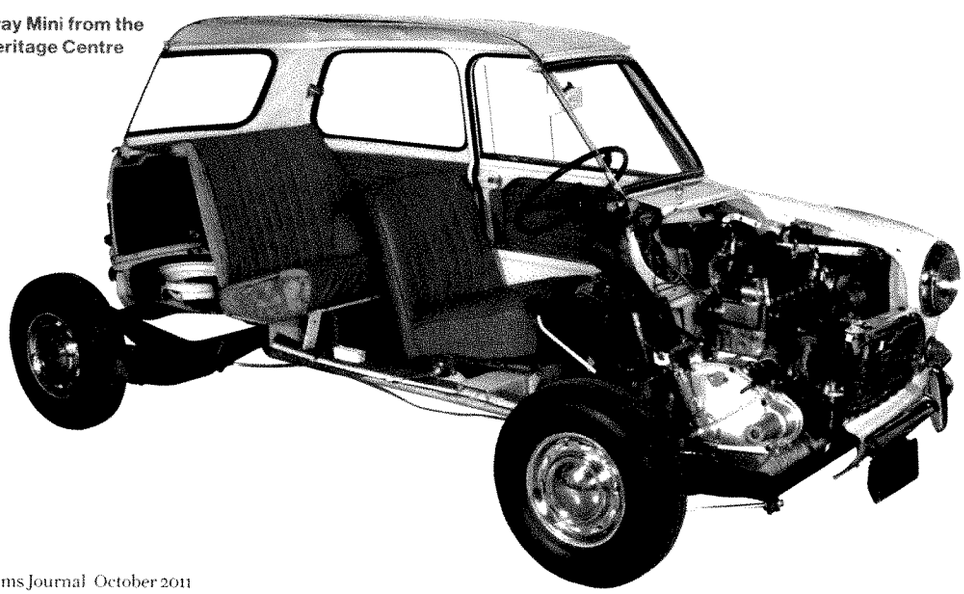
"A youngster growing up now in Coventry or the region wouldn't know that it was this big industrial motor city because they would not have experienced it," says Chris van Schaardenburgh, the curator of vehicles at Coventry Transport Museum. "We should retain the link, otherwise what's the point of keeping 250 old cars if no one who walks through the door knows why they are relevant to the city?"

Van Schaardenburgh says some of the museum's displays are still quite traditional, although the city council-run museum is looking at a major redevelopment project. The venue gets visitor figures of 350,000-400,000 a year, but van Schaardenburgh says it could improve what it offers.

'Rows of cars won't do it for everybody. You have to make more effort'

"I'm an enthusiast and it's nice to see enthusiasts, but you also want to bring normal people in," van Schaardenburgh says. "The more recent galleries get more involved in the story and that is where the future should be. I love cars, lots of people love cars, but rows and rows of them won't do it for everybody. You have to make a bit more effort."

The Heritage Lottery Fund has provided lots of support for transport museum redevelopments in recent years. But in these harsh economic times, it is not always easy to secure funding. Earlier this year, the National Railway Museum in York was forced to scrap plans



A cut-away Mini from the Motor Heritage Centre

for a £21m upgrade to its Great Hall after the Regional Growth Fund turned down its bid for £7m funding.

But the museum, which is part of the National Museum of Science and Industry, is still using some of the analysis it did for the NRM+ project to develop the museum on a more piecemeal basis. A £600,000 art gallery opened in July with an exhibition of Japanese woodblock prints showing the country's first railway line, which ran from Tokyo to Yokohama. In the same month, the museum also opened phase one of a scheme to redisplay Station Hall, which is aiming to create a more immersive railway station experience.

Paul Bowers, head of interpretation and design at the National Railway Museum, says the Station Hall project is part of a wider aim to get visitors closer to the objects.

"Access is a major challenge," says Bowers, who worked on the development of galleries at London's Natural History Museum's Darwin Centre. "You want to give the most inclusive experience for our visitors but a footplate is up high and that requires steps or long ramps."

According to Bowers, the scale of the objects also creates challenges. "There are 1,000s of smaller items in the collection, but it is difficult to tell their stories when they are dwarfed by large vehicles," he says.

But despite all the challenges, Bowers, like others who work with transport collections, feels the objects provide numerous ways to engage visitors.

"One of the great things about the objects is that they prompt conversations," says Bowers. "For us, promoting that type of dialogue is fundamental. And unless you are creating dialogue about the collections, all you have is a load of dead metal."

Bryan at the Heritage Motor Centre agrees that transport objects are great for engaging museum visitors.

"The thing about transport museums, with a few exceptions, is that people can connect quite directly with the objects. And that is where all museums succeed – when people can identify with the objects on display."

Travel in the future city

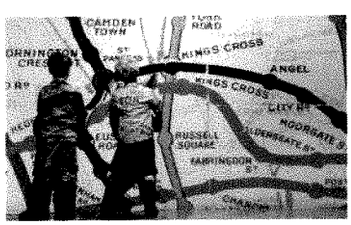
A temporary exhibition at the London Transport Museum could provide pointers to the way that displays in transport museums might develop.

Sense and the City (until 18 March 2012) looks at how emerging technologies are changing the way people access and experience London.

The exhibition opens with a range of past visions of how the future might have been. It features images by architects such as Le Corbusier and Archigram and objects such as the Sinclair C5.

Curator Veronica Dominiak has worked hard to source interesting artefacts for the exhibition, but a huge effort has also gone into the technological side of the show.

The concept was developed by museum consultant Stephen Feber who researched how GPS, smartphones, mobile apps and social media are changing the way



we live, work and play in the city.

A centrepiece of the exhibition is an interactive table with eight screens that allows visitors to look at films, animations, and data visualisations on subjects ranging from the cashless society and driverless cars, to reactive buildings and augmented reality. Visitors can also give feedback about such developments.

Feber says one of the aims is to use the platforms created to gather, store and display the digital elements of the exhibition for future work in the museum.

The London Transport Museum has worked with a number of partners on Sense and the City, including students at the Royal College of Art, who have developed a range of practical ideas about how today's technology might be applied on tomorrow's street. The exhibition also features data visualisations from such developers as Carlo Ratti of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Aaron Koblin of Google Creative and students at the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis at University College London.

"This will be a platform to look at new ways of thinking about cities," says Feber.

Getting creative

Many museums and galleries are forging partnerships with the creative industries. *Geraldine Kendall* finds out why

Above: Jade Folawiyo's lampshades, made during her residency at the Design Museum, London. Right: jeweller and metalsmith Laura Baxter created a flock of blackbirds at the Bowes Museum as part of the Museumaker programme

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Visitors to the 19th-century Bowes Museum in County Durham last winter could not have failed to notice a flock of exotic black birds stalking the snow-covered gardens outside. Further south, Brighton's famously decadent Royal Pavilion was infested by an eerie swarm of dark butterflies, which clung to its drapes and crawled over its delicate tableware.

Neither museum had any need to call in pest control; they were in fact taking part in Museumaker, a project funded by Arts Council England (ACE), and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's Renaissance programme. Between 2009 and 2011, the initiative saw 16 heritage institutions collaborate with contemporary craftmakers to produce installations that, as the organisers put it, unlocked the "creative potential of collections".

Museumaker is one of a number of schemes launched in recent years to integrate museum work more strategically with other creative industries. Such crossovers are not a new phenomenon, but at a time when responsibility for museums and galleries is being transferred to ACE, more and more heritage institutions are looking at what benefits this kind of cross-pollination can bring, particularly when there is often an existing overlap in skills, resources and audiences.

The Bowes Museum is a French-style chateau with an extensive decorative art collection. It applied to the Museumaker scheme in order to utilise its public gardens while parts of the interior were being refurbished.

"The idea was that, while all the building work was going on, a maker could bring something of the essence of the collection inside to the outside," says Viv Vallack, the museum's head of exhibitions.

As with all Museumaker projects, it was essential that the museum's collection remained at the heart of the installation. Noticing a preponderance of bird motifs throughout the building, the jeweller and metalsmith Laura Baxter drew her designs from a vast a range of different objects.

"She picked out birds on everything from ceramics and textiles to carved panels,"

Creative support

Digital R&D Fund for Arts and Culture A £500,000 fund to encourage arts and cultural organisations to work alongside those with digital expertise.
www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/digital-rd-fund-arts-culture

National Skills Academy Creative & Cultural The academy will establish a network of training providers and employers to support skills needs of the creative and cultural industries.
http://nsa-ccskills.co.uk

Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy Four hubs with an equal share of £19.2m funding to develop partnerships and commercial opportunities between academia and the creative economy.
www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/Policy/Pages/KnowledgeTransferPolicy.aspx

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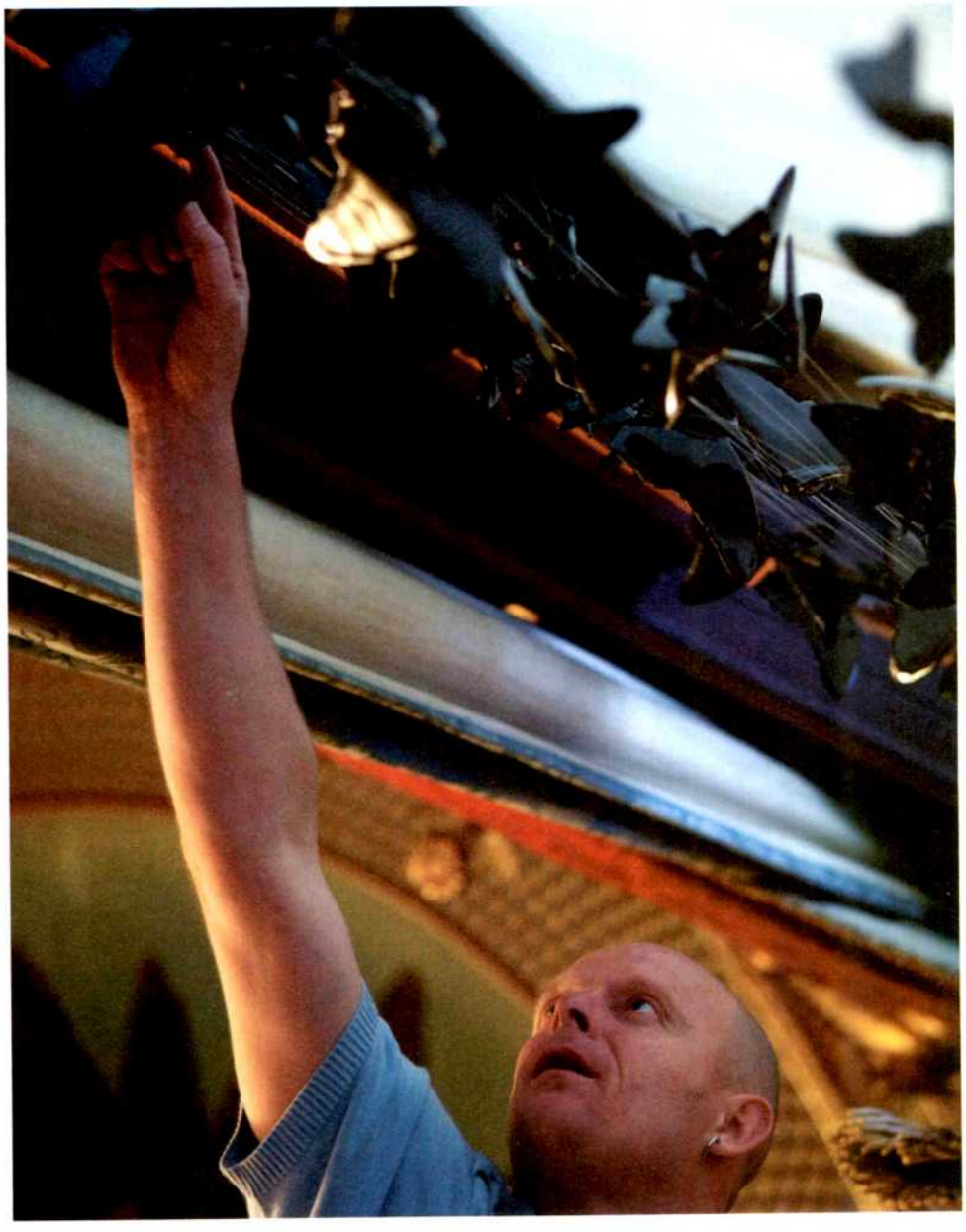


Left: Clare Twomey's butterfly intervention, A Dark Day in Paradise, at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, last year. Right: installing the ceramic butterflies was a precision job

says Bowes Museum principal keeper Jane Whittaker. "She found birds we'd forgotten were there."

The resulting installation, Garden of Lantern Birds, featured lace-like metal silhouettes of everything from storks to peacocks dotted around the garden. At night, the birds doubled as lanterns, casting long shadows over the grounds.

> 'It made people look more closely at the collection'

"The external installation added a completely new dimension to the building," says Vallack. "It was during the winter months, so added a decorative feature to what can be a dreary time of year."

The project also offered the museum a chance to reinterpret its collection in a fresh and accessible way. Staff created labels to highlight the objects, sending visitors on a mission to track them down.

"Seeing an element of the collections represented in such an unexpected way was very exciting and promoted discussion," says Vallack.

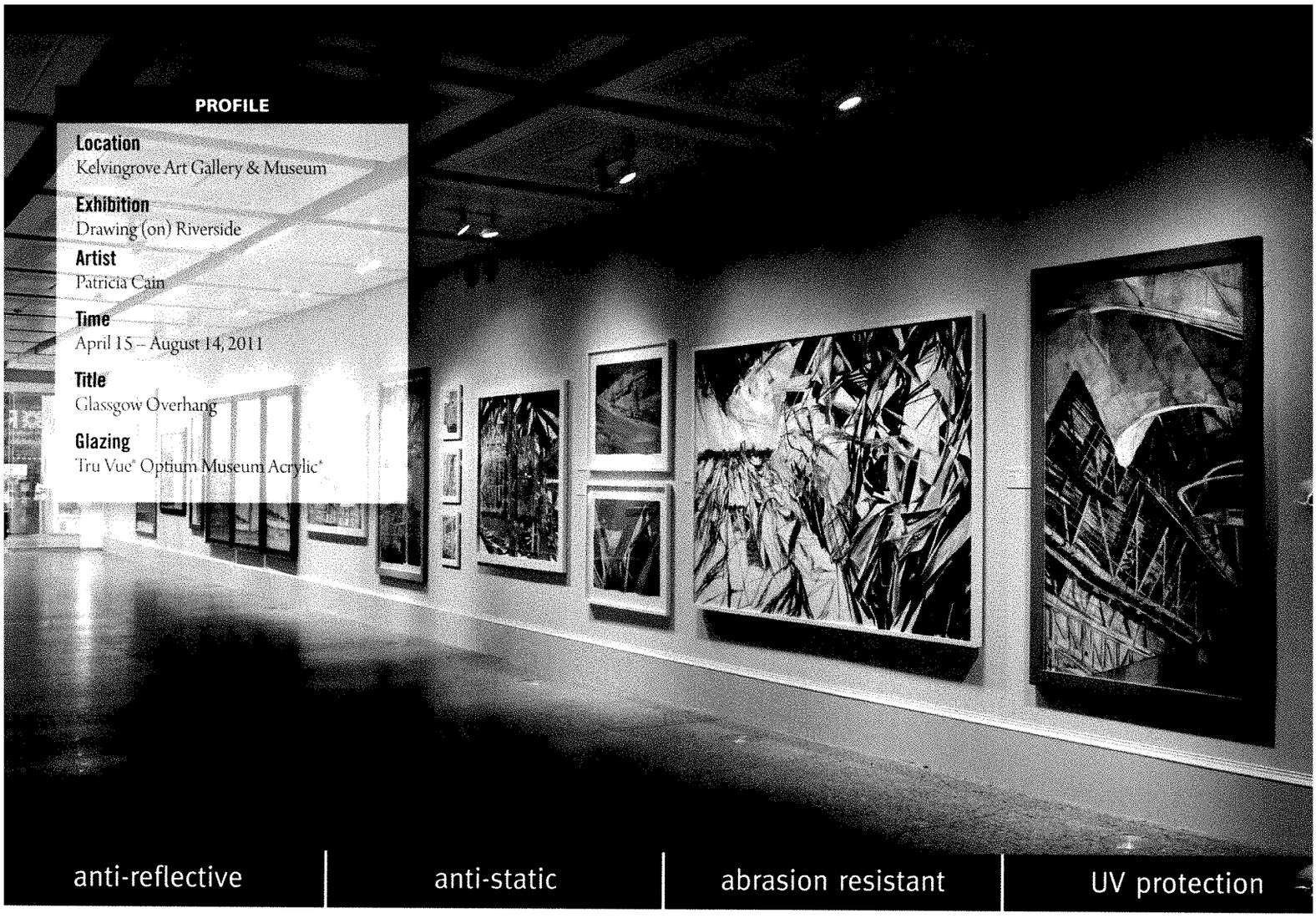
The same was true in Brighton, says Nicola Coleby, keeper of exhibitions at Brighton & Hove's Royal Pavilion and Museums. "It was stimulating to see how the contemporary can reflect the traditional," she says of the exhibition, A Dark Day in Paradise, which saw ceramicist Clare Twomey arrange hundreds of glazed black butterflies in the main banqueting hall to capture the building's "grotesque excessiveness".

"The palace can be overwhelming when you walk in," says Coleby. "People said it made them think differently and look more closely at the collection."

Working with a craft-maker provided both museums with an excellent opportunity for community engagement. The Bowes Museum ran events such as a hands-on workshop where children painted Baxter's bird silhouettes on sky lanterns that were released during the annual Halloween parade. At the Royal Pavilion, a group of young people worked with an animator to make a film using Twomey's butterfly designs.

Although its future is uncertain due to cuts, Museumaker's organisers say the scheme was an excellent example of how museums can fulfil the brief of the arts council's 10-year strategy of Achieving Great Art for Everyone. The document envisages a future in which heritage, culture and the arts diversify audiences and win funding by achieving a deeper synergy with each other through "partnerships and shared investment".

And it's not just ACE that has declared a strategic interest in crossover work. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills believe the creative industries, which make up 5.6% of the UK's gross value, will be a key area for growth amid an otherwise sluggish economy. They have announced a raft of initiatives recently to stimulate development and partnership between the creative sectors (see ▶



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box, p30), including apprenticeship schemes, knowledge exchange hubs and a new Creative Industries Council.

The creative economy has a wide-ranging remit, spanning disciplines from performance to design, fashion and the digital arts industry. One institution that has gone further than most in blurring boundaries is London's Design Museum, which has had a head start because of its natural links with the design sector.

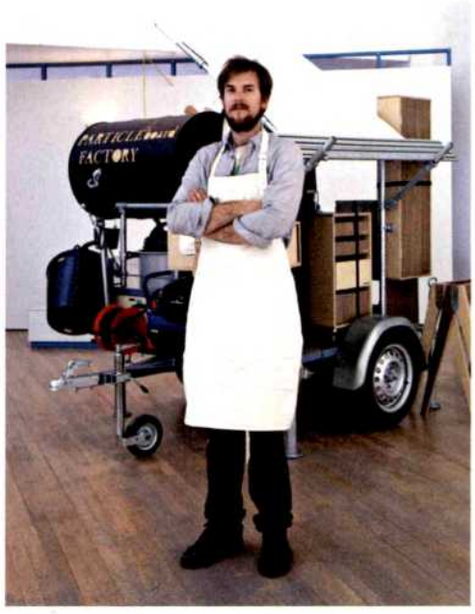
Since 2007, the museum has run an annual Designers in Residence programme that offers up-and-coming designers the chance to make and display site-specific pieces in the galleries. In previous years, residents have created everything from a Curiosity Cabinet highlighting unusual museum items to a Continuous Bench that flowed in and out of the museum's outdoor glass tank. Alumni include architects, textile designers and electronic engineers.

The programme is an example of how mutually beneficial collaboration can be, says Margaret Cubbage, a curator at the museum. "For the designers, when they start out they've normally been in a little bubble and they haven't had much interaction with the public. The residency really helps them think about how accessible their work is."

The residents have a chance to explore ideas on a much bigger scale than would otherwise be possible, says Cubbage. "They have to meet certain criteria within the museum context but we encourage a creative approach. They can try out new ideas that would be financially impossible in the real world."

In return, the residents make the museum more dynamic for visitors. "It's great because the space looks completely different every year," says Cubbage.

Residents participate in learning activities, public events and talks. "They're very visible throughout the residency," says Cubbage. "Last year the designers set up studios at the bottom of the stairs and worked there. People could talk to them about their work."



Above: Will Shannon's mobile Particle Board Factory, built during his residency at the Design Museum, London. Below: a 3D image of a Punch model produced by the Meshlab program

Cubbage says this insight into the design process helps visitors see why some of the museum's more functional objects warrant being "put on a plinth in a museum context".

The museum continues a relationship with the designers long after their residencies have ended. Last year it hosted a one-night event, Resident, Steady, Go!, in which current and past residents took over the museum, staging intriguing interventions – the most popular being an "avatar suit" with a camera and headpiece that allowed visitors to view themselves moving in a virtual world.

In Bristol, cultural and arts institutions have taken a city-wide approach to closer integration. Philip Walker, manager of public programmes at Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives, says it's more effective to promote a strategy of inclusion rather than having "venues fighting each other for visitors and investment".

"In these economically testing times, this approach will pay dividends," says Walker. "We can work stronger together as we make not only economies of scale, but also present a more coherent city-wide offer for visitors."

The city's newest venue, the £27m M Shed (see review, p46), has become a hub for creative activity and partnerships, says Walker.

> 'It's great – the space looks completely different every year'

During the city's Encounters film festival, M Shed teamed up with the media venue Watershed, and the Arnolfini arts centre to screen archival films, drawing in crowds of festival-goers. The museum has also produced media content and applications and worked with local writers for the Bristol Festival of Literature.

Not all of its collaboration is strategically planned – M Shed also enjoys an informal partnership with its close neighbour, Aardman Animations, creator of the Wallace and Gromit films. Aardman devised a boardgame as an exhibit for the museum and allows it to display old animations free of charge. The studio has also edited films for M Shed, saving it money on production. In return, the museum loaned a large model ship to animators when they were pitching their latest film, Pirates.

Working with the film studio helps the museum foster a strong sense of local identity. "To people from Bristol, Aardman is a source of pride," says curator Andrew King.

In the coming years, museums will need to become much more external in their thinking, says Walker. "We need to treat our museums as venues that are an active part of a city's current life, not as passive repositories."

Geraldine Kendall is a freelance journalist

Museums and the digital arts

The digital arts and software industry is the fastest growing area of the creative economy. One EU-funded project, Icon, recently published a R&D paper exploring how cultural heritage institutions could develop new revenue streams through marketing 3D models of their objects.

Icon participants, including London's Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), are working with digital artists and eventually aim to establish a virtual library.

James Stevenson, the V&A's photographic manager, says such a repository could potentially be an invaluable

resource to film-makers and games designers seeking accurate models.

It's cost effective too, he says. "At the moment, studios buy models from suppliers who make things from scratch by looking at photos. For them to do something of the same quality as we get from our 3D-object imaging in one day would take a month."

Collaboration is essential for the project to succeed. "[3D] equipment costs tens of thousands of pounds, which is very high for cultural heritage. It also requires complex skills," says Stevenson. Working symbiotically with digital artists would allow museums access to resources they could not otherwise afford. *James Stevenson will be speaking about digital assets in an exhibition seminar at the Museums Association conference and exhibition in Brighton on 3 October. www.museumsassociation.org/conference*

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Godfrey Worsdale at a glance

Godfrey Worsdale started his career in the early 1990s at the British Museum, working in the department of prints and drawings. At the same time he established Cultural Instructions, an independent gallery for contemporary art in London.

He moved to Southampton City Art Gallery as a curator in 1995 and became its director within three years. From there he moved to the north east to set up the £14.2m Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, which opened in 2007. Worsdale co-curated Mima's debut exhibition, Draw, which featured drawings by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol exhibited in relation to works by contemporary artists including Damien Hirst, and Gavin Turk.

Worsdale joined the judging panel of the Zoo Art Fair in 2007 and the Paul Hamlyn Awards in 2008. He is the chairman of the Visual Arts and Galleries Association.

He joined Baltic as its director in November 2008. He is a judge of this year's Turner Prize, which Baltic is hosting.

MARIAH ROBERTSON ARTWORKS COURTESY MUSEUM 52, NEW YORK. COPYRIGHT THE ARTIST

Prize draw

As the Baltic prepares to welcome visitors to this year's Turner Prize exhibition, *Simon Stephens* visits Gateshead to meet its director, Godfrey Worsdale. Photographs by *Phil Sayer*

Godfrey Worsdale had mixed feelings when Arts Council England (ACE) announced the winners and losers under its new national portfolio system in March.

He is director of the Baltic centre for contemporary art in Gateshead, which will get nearly £3m in 2012-13 after becoming one of the organisations that replaced the previous regularly funded portfolio. But he is also the chairman of the Visual Arts and Galleries Association (Vaga), which lost all its arts council funding.

On balance, Worsdale thought ACE took a sensible approach to tackling a 14.9% cut to its grant-in-aid from government.

"Because of my roles at Vaga and Baltic I guess I can see both sides," says Worsdale, who joined Baltic in 2008 from the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (Mima). "My feeling within the broader cultural sector is that the arts council did a very good job in quite tricky circumstances. I suppose the big question, given the uncertainties about the world economy, is whether this is part of the pain or all of the pain. It remains to be seen."

Baltic itself is on the up, with its £3m award making it ACE's highest-funded visual arts organisation. This year is particularly important as it is about to host the Turner Prize. The exhibition opens on 21 October and it is the first time in 27 years that the prize will be shown at a non-Tate venue, and is only the second time the award has ventured outside London.

Worsdale says that the staging of the Turner Prize has built on what he describes as a "fulfilling and rewarding relationship with Tate". Baltic hosted an Anselm Kiefer show in 2010-11 that was part of Artist Rooms, the collection of modern and contemporary art jointly owned by Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland. And in conjunction with Tate Connects, an initiative to develop partnerships between Tate and other UK galleries, Baltic opened ▶

an exhibition featuring Damien Hirst's work Pharmacy in October 2009.

Baltic is now looking forward to an influx of visitors keen to see the work of this year's Turner Prize nominees: Karla Black; Martin Boyce; Hilary Lloyd Man; and George Shaw. Worsdale says hosting the prize fits in well with the Baltic's approach to audience engagement.

"It is such a well-recognised brand in contemporary art, so we know that it's an exhibition that will get people talking, and people talking about contemporary art is very central to our activity."

Worsdale also points out that the Turner Prize is a national award, so it makes perfect sense for it to move around the country, particularly since the regional contemporary art scene has changed dramatically over the past ten years, at least in terms of new galleries.

"If you look at the art landscape now in comparison with the mid-90s, London might have been lacking a Tate Modern, but the rest of the country was lacking a Nottingham Contemporary, a Mima, a Towner, a Turner Contemporary – the list goes on and on. We are a very, very different nation now."

Baltic was one of the new generation of galleries that opened after 2000, boosted by a growing interest in contemporary art among the public and the lottery money that made new capital projects possible.

But progress for the £46m Baltic has not been as smooth as some of its peers. One of the main problems is that it has now had four directors since it opened in 2002.

The first director, Sune Nordgren from Sweden, left a year after the gallery opened. There were concerns over his control of the business side of the Baltic and the arts council questioned the adequacy of the organisation's financial controls. Nordgren's successor, Stephen Snoddy, resigned after 11 months in the job. He was suspended after being arrested on an assault charge, which was proved unfounded, though he declined to return.

Next came Chicago-born Peter Doroshenko, who stayed for three years, but left not long after staff made allegations of victimisation and ineffective management. Following this upheaval, Baltic's trustees considered splitting the business and artistic roles of the director into two posts, but Worsdale was appointed to fulfil both functions.

'Baltic needed to steady down and to what it does well'

"The organisation has always had huge potential, but I felt that Baltic's achievements have been overshadowed by slightly overblown, frenzied reactions to the different things that had gone on here," says Worsdale. "What it needed was just to be able to steady down and do what it does well."

But the problems at Baltic obviously needed more than just a steady as she goes approach, as Worsdale has made some pretty big changes.

He has repositioned the front-of-house attendant team under the management of the learning and engagement department, which affected more than half the employees in the

organisation. He also restructured the senior management, taking a layer of directors out. Lastly, he simplified the exhibition programme into three seasons a year in order to make it easier for visitors to understand.

In late 2009, Baltic also gained a new chairman, Peter Buchan, the chief executive of Newcastle-based Ryder Architecture. At the same time a new chief curator, Laurence Sillars, joined from Tate Liverpool.

Much of Worsdale's experience in gallery management was gained while developing the £14.2m Mima gallery in Middlesbrough.

"In my first week I interviewed and appointed an architect and set out to produce a brief from absolute scratch, which was a fabulous experience," says Worsdale, who is pleased with his legacy in Middlesbrough. "It has been a tremendous success. The collections have grown exponentially, the Art Fund has included it in its AFI scheme, and the recognition for its programmes has been tremendous. It has really seized a place in the art world. Mima is my local gallery, as I still live in that part of the region, so I am pleased to see it go from strength to strength."

While things seem to have been going well at Baltic, this is obviously not true for Vaga following its loss of ACE funding. But Worsdale is putting a brave face on this.

"It is an interesting one for Vaga," he says. "Vaga really needs to be an independent, member-led organisation and being in receipt of arts council funding was a slight misnomer because you aren't really an independent organisation if you're heavily dependant on a stakeholder's resources. In that respect it means Vaga has an opportunity to be really independent and secure that independence by serving its members interests and being given a free hand to represent those members' views."

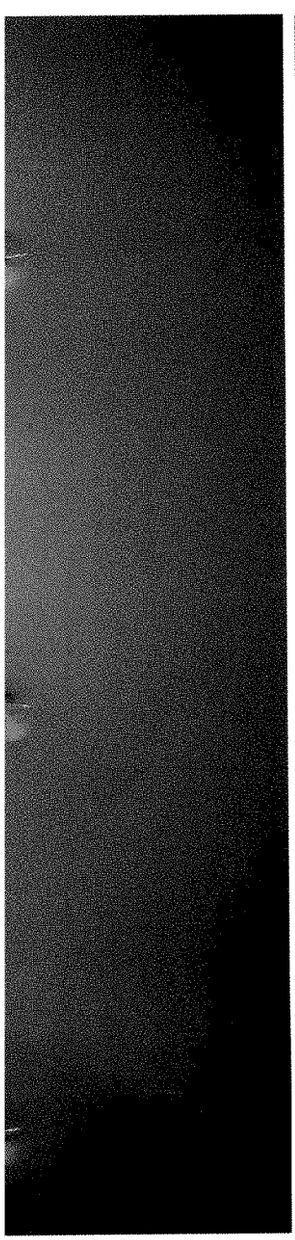
Worsdale is keen for Vaga to make this transition from ACE-supported association to genuine membership body.

"Now is the time that we really need a Vaga. We need its importance to be understood and we need to see Vaga making an impact on behalf of its members and the wider arts."

Having an impact on the wider arts sector is something that Worsdale is hoping to see the Baltic do as well. One of the gallery's roles is to coordinate Turning Point, a national consortium based on regional networks of artists, arts professionals and arts organisations in England that are looking at ways to strengthen the visual arts. Turning Point was initiated by the arts council, but responsibility for its development has been passed on to the sector.

Its early days for this new arrangement and, like Vaga, Turning Point's precise future role is unclear. But overall, despite the cuts that visual arts organisations are having to make, Worsdale is confident that the sector is resourceful enough to move forward.

"We are a resilient sector and have never been one that has had lots of resources anyway, so even in an organisation as large as Baltic we are always looking at ways of getting the absolute best outcome for our investments and to be as efficient as possible," Worsdale says. "I think that it is a defining characteristic of the visual arts."



Baltic at a glance

Left: a Mariah Robertson work on display at the Baltic. Right and above right: the Baltic has attracted nearly four million visitors since opening in 2002

The Baltic opened in July 2002 and its inaugural exhibition, B.OPEN, featured work by Chris Burden, Carsten Holler, Julian Opie, Jaume Plensa and Jane & Louise Wilson.

Plans for the gallery began in 1991 when Northern Arts announced an ambition to achieve "major new capital facilities for the contemporary visual arts in central Tyneside". Work started on Baltic in 1998 and the architect was Ellis Williams Architects. Major funders included the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Gateshead Council, Northern Rock Foundation, the European Regional Development Fund and One NorthEast.

Baltic has hosted more than 40 exhibitions and welcomed nearly four million visitors since opening.

Godfrey Worsdale is its fourth director after Peter Doroshenko, Stephen Snoddy and the original director, Sune Nordgren.

Baltic received £2,813,486 in 2011-12 from Arts Council England in the last year under the Regularly Funded Organisations scheme. Under ACE's new national portfolio system the gallery will receive £2,963,000 in 2012-13, £3,034,112 in 2013-14 and £3,112,999 in 2014-15.

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Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Geraldine Kendall finds out what makes visitors to the Manchester Masonic Museum marvel

Where The Freemasons' Hall in Manchester, the headquarters of the Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire.

What "The museum is dedicated to promoting the values of, and stimulating debate about, the heritage of freemasonry," says project officer Elizabeth May. Once seen as a secret society, freemasonry is now a worldwide fraternity with an estimated six million members.

Opened The museum opened as a private collection in 1929, but has been accessible to the public since September 2010.

Collection "We have around 4,000 objects," says May, "including a large collection of masonic jewels, aprons and certificates from the 18th century." Most artefacts relate to the local masonic community, but the museum also holds a large variety of international objects. "We have an unexpected collection of Breeches – or Geneva – Bibles, which we have discovered in the last few months," says May.

Help at hand One volunteer curator, two regular volunteers and a work placement student. May, the only full-time member of staff, is a project officer on a soon-to-be-completed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project to develop conservation and training at the museum.

Budget Donations, plus £1,000 each year from the Manchester Association for Masonic Research. It was recently given a £46,900 HLF grant.

Visitors Unknown, although the museum's public opening last September attracted more than 500 people. Admission is free.

Highlights "Our current HLF project focused on the conservation of a unique set of three masonic robes, aprons and crowns donated to the museum in 1938," says May. The Memorial Hall itself, a neo-classical and art deco space with a high-vaulted ceiling, "always gets the wow effect", adds May.

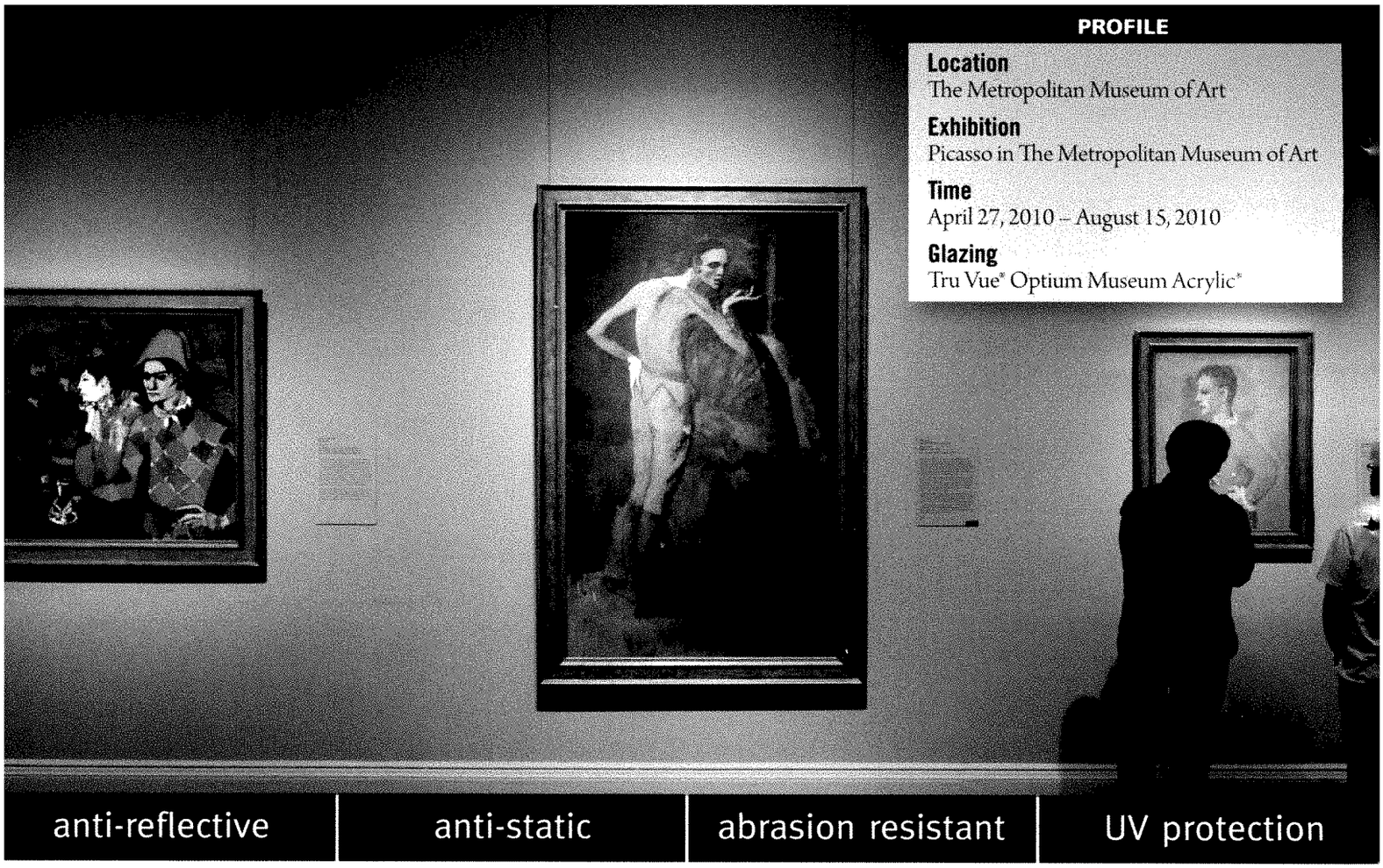
Sticky moment "The most serious was in 1994 when 160 jewels, many of them gold, were stolen from our collection," says May. "It sadly made the local freemasons more wary about providing access to the building."

Survival tip "Keep the community involved, and challenge them to participate," says May.

Future plans Renovation works in 2012 will see the headquarters moving to one floor while the rest of the building will be turned into conference facilities and offices. One whole floor will be developed for the museum.

http://manchestermasonicmuseum.org.uk

Top: a masonic jewel made by a 19th-century French prisoner of war. Above: a tracing board with symbols for the instruction of freemasonry. Left: the Freemasons' Hall is an impressive space



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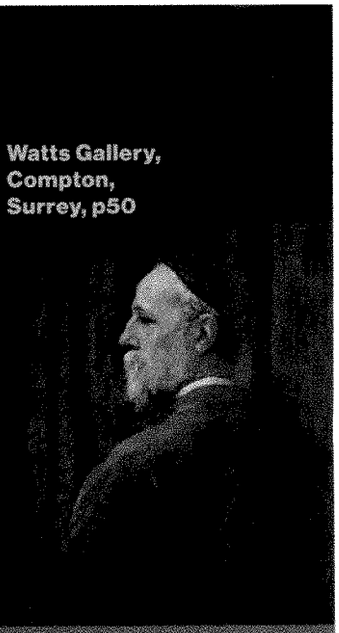

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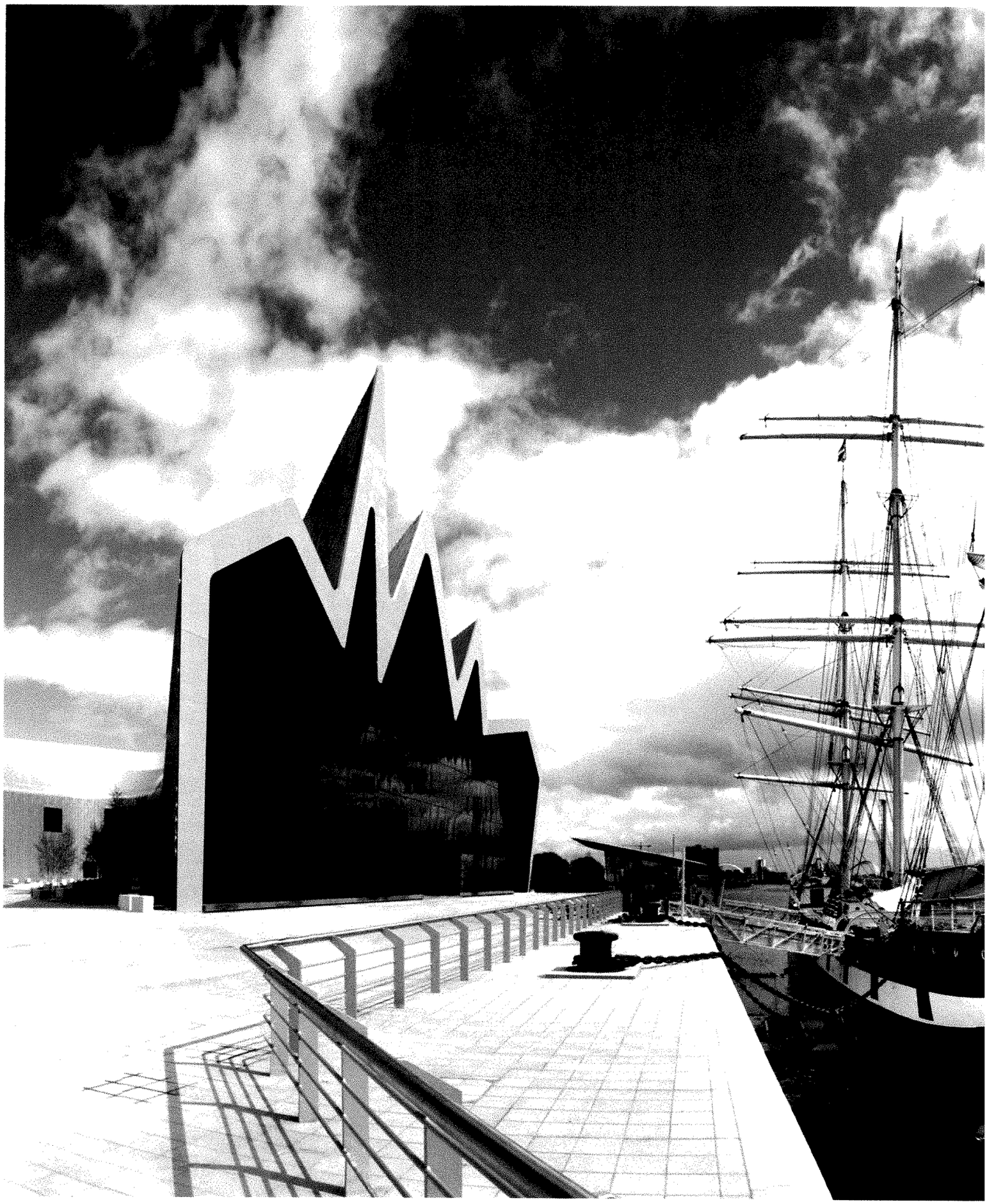
Reviews

'Cars and bicycles are dramatically displayed on raised circuits and platforms projecting from the high walls'
Oliver Green on the Riverside Museum, Glasgow

The Holburne Museum, Bath, p54

M Shed, Bristol, p46

METAPHOR: PHOTO BY ANDREW TOTLEY (HOLBURNE); BRISTOL MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES (M SHED); LENNY WARREN; WARREN MEDIA PROFESSOR MUSEUMS SELF-PORTRAIT BY GF WATTS (WATTS GALLERY)



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Riverside Museum, Glasgow

A big-name architect and an innovative approach to display have won over visitors to Glasgow's new transport museum, including *Oliver Green*

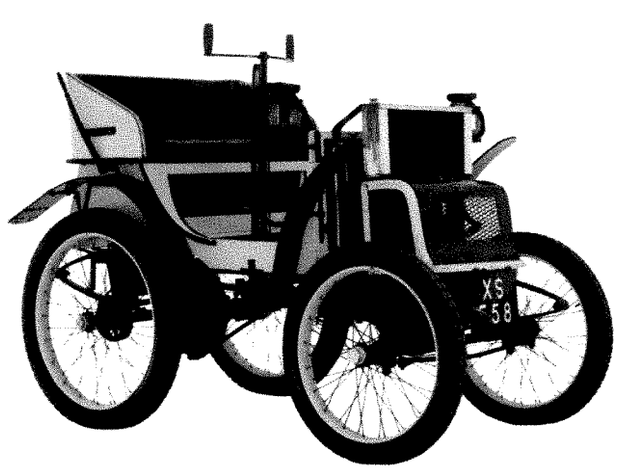
Glasgow's new Riverside Museum welcomed its 500,000th visitor only seven weeks after its opening on 21 June. The city council has always supported its museums on a scale way beyond any English (or Scottish) local authority, and it is heartening to see this fine civic tradition maintained in a period of economic gloom. At the launch, council leader Gordon Matheson pledged to maintain free entry to this and all the city's museums. The Riverside Museum, he said, "belongs to the people of Glasgow".

The citizens are flocking to it already, and not just because the museum is free or, as the local tour bus guide quipped when I visited, "to see how they've spent our money". The Riverside Museum is the latest and largest of a series of venues that have housed Glasgow's extensive transport and technology collections over the years.

When Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum opened in 1901, its cavernous galleries were used as a shop window for the city's industrial products as well as its impressive art and natural history collections. The most popular of these technical displays were the dozens of beautiful scale models of ships built on the Clyde, then Glasgow's major industry. These were all donated to the city by the shipbuilders, though not entirely out of altruism or civic pride. As the Scottish journalist and broadcaster Muriel Gray puts it in her entertaining recent history of Kelvingrove, this was also an early case of product placement advertising.

Glasgow's first transport museum was opened in a former corporation tram depot in 1964 not long after the city's much-loved tram system was replaced by buses. There were Glasgow-built railway engines as well as trams on display and the large Clyde Room housed the ever-popular ship models. In 1987 the growing collections were moved again, to a much more suitable home in the refurbished Kelvin Hall, where there was space to create a complete street of reconstructed shops, including part of a Glasgow subway station.

The Riverside Museum is a product of Glasgow's post-industrial reinvention of itself as a city of culture. Since the 1980s the Clyde has been trying to shed its image as a dirty backwater running through semi-derelict industrial badlands. The Clyde Waterfront regeneration project has transformed the area, with business, residential and leisure amenities replacing shipyards.



Sleek new museum

The museum is a key part of this redevelopment, and it has been built on an appropriately historic waterfront site where the River Kelvin joins the Clyde. Many ships were built nearby, including the sailing vessel Glenlee, now moored beside the museum and providing a complementary heritage attraction.

The elegant, traditional lines of the tall ship are a dramatic counterpoint to Zaha Hadid's sleek new museum, which the architect herself describes as "a sophisticated shed". It is an ingenious steel and glass structure with a distinctive jagged roofline and a tardis-like ability to provide far more room inside than seems possible from the outside. Its 7,500 sq metres of public space is slightly larger than the old Museum of Transport, which looked enormous because of the great rectangular bulk of the Kelvin Hall.

Twenty-five years ago, a giant shed is exactly what a new transport museum here would ▶

Top: the new Riverside Museum is big enough to accommodate large-scale objects.
Far left: Zaha Hadid's design for the museum is spectacular.
Left: an Argyll motorcar

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have been like. The grim industrial warehouse style of the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre just upriver, the first of the new Clyde Waterfront buildings to open in 1985, is a reminder of how important it is to appoint an architect with the flair and imagination to create something distinctive.

Hadid's sinuously curved silver building at the Riverside Museum is a far more stylish structure, designed to be energy efficient and practical. My only misgiving is the light green interior colour scheme, which casts a bilious glow over everything from the collections to the cafe.

The best exterior view of the museum is probably from over the river in Govan, and now that there is a reinstated passenger ferry service you can approach it from across the Clyde. Ironically for a transport museum, getting to it is not that easy. The car park is far too small, and the public transport alternatives are poor. There is only one bus route from the city centre, and the nearest railway stations are at least 15 minutes walk away. If only Glasgow still had its trams.

The shape and volume of the Riverside Museum has enabled the designers to break away from serried ranks of vehicles, which so often inhibit creativity in transport museums. Cars and bicycles are dramatically displayed on raised circuits and platforms projecting from the high walls.

Many of the ship models are presented as a passing show in a display case with a moving conveyor. The lines of large, heavy vehicles that featured in the Kelvin Hall have been broken up to present displays in and around individually placed objects such as trams and railway engines.

Dramatic displays

This won't please traditionalists, who might prefer a tightly packed study collection in a garage, but it does create a great sense of drama in the displays. I really did hear somebody exclaim 'wow!' as they walked into the museum, music to the ears of any curator or designer.

The creative team at Glasgow were well aware of the old Museum of Transport's popularity, and there was extensive public consultation to establish what people would like to see in the new displays. Inevitably, there was a strong element of "like the old museum, but better" about this: more information, more hands-on displays, more access to vehicles and a re-creation of Kelvin Street, with its shops and subway station.

The museum delivers all this with the characteristic storytelling approach to interpretation that Glasgow Museums applied so successfully in the redisplay of Kelvingrove in 2006. There is very little on the technical specification of vehicles, and the collections are focal points for well-presented stories about how transport has affected people's lives, such as the once familiar experience of taking the tram to a dance hall on a Saturday night. Everyday tales of Glasgow life are evocatively told through story panels, touchscreens and multimedia.

Lockerbie bombing

Some of the stories are curious choices. I'm not convinced that the giant South African steam locomotive built in Polmadie and exported to South Africa in 1945 is best used to illustrate the evils of apartheid, which was introduced soon after the engine went into service. Surely the museum's largest exhibit, specially brought back to Scotland at considerable cost, is there primarily to represent Glasgow's once huge locomotive building industry, which involved entire communities in the city. Here, the museum has chosen to override the local aspect with a wider story that is only tangentially related to the exhibit.

There is a rather bizarre display about the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, built around an airport luggage scanner. An important and emotive subject to be sure, although for Scotland rather than Glasgow, and perhaps not best considered in the far corner of a transport museum. Other odd exhibits feature accidents and road safety. These themes feel as though they have been introduced to satisfy a particular social or education agenda, but they simply don't work as museum displays.

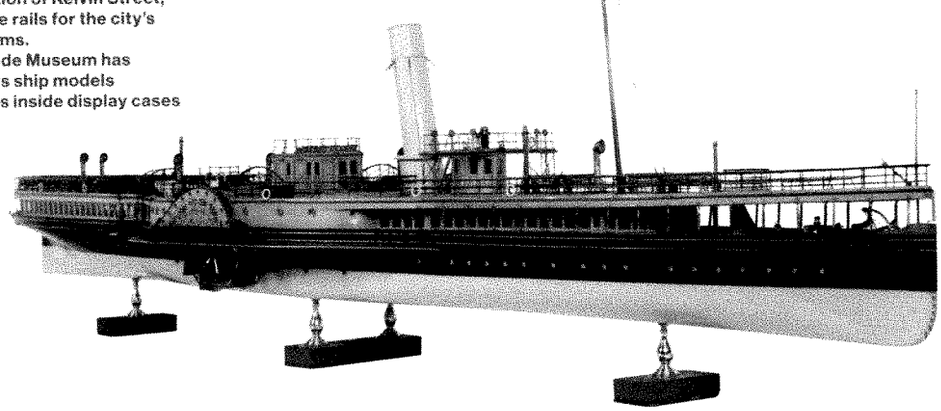
The Riverside Museum has no recommended visitor route or clear thematic structure, perhaps deliberately. Exploring the museum in a random way is very enjoyable, though I would have appreciated a little more guidance and help in putting the displays into context. The landscape of the Clyde has changed so much that on emerging from the museum it is still difficult to imagine the busy shipyards that were on this site only a few years ago.

One visit will definitely not be enough for most visitors. Glasgow Museums and Zaha Hadid have taken a novel and creative approach to the traditionally staid presentation of transport and technology at Riverside. It is already a deservedly popular success.

Oliver Green is a research fellow for London Transport Museum

Project data

Cost £74m
Main funders Glasgow City Council £47.4m; Heritage Lottery Fund £21.6m; Riverside Museum Appeal £5m
Architect Zaha Hadid Architects
Exhibition design Event Communications
Exhibition fit-out Mivan
Software, AV, interactives 55 Degrees
Building construction BAM
Engineer Buro Happold
Display cases Conservation by Design/Rothsteins



Above: a re-creation of Kelvin Street, complete with the rails for the city's much-missed trams.
Right: the Riverside Museum has placed many of its ship models on conveyer-belts inside display cases

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M Shed, Bristol

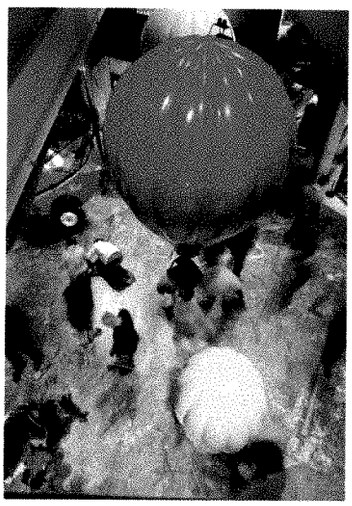
Tim Bryan and *Sara Selwood* share their sharply contrasting views on the success of Bristol's new city museum

A rich history

Growing up in Bristol, my first experience of a museum was a trip to the City Museum and Art Gallery. As I remember, there was little on display that really told the story of the city of my birth. But for a new generation of Bristolians, the opening of M Shed is a great opportunity to learn about the people and events that have shaped its history.

The 1950s harbourside transit shed that housed the old Bristol Industrial Museum has been completely transformed. I'm not sure the architecture does much to support the stories told within the museum, but visitor facilities are excellent and visitors get stunning views of the harbour and surrounding city.

With a history as rich as Bristol's, there is a lot to cover, and M Shed displays are spread across three themes, Bristol Places, Bristol People and Bristol Life. The overriding impression is that M Shed is crammed full with a rich and fascinating collection of objects, photographs and artworks. There is no lack of interpretation in the form of graphics, interactives and video, all of which supports the stories and exhibits displayed and underpins the overall themes for each gallery.



Top: M Shed is housed in a redeveloped transit shed.
Above and right: views of the Bristol Places gallery

The Bristol Places gallery attempts to give visitors a feel for how Bristol has grown physically, and includes elements of archaeology, architecture, transport and social history. There are many highlights; in the middle of the gallery an enormous satellite photograph of the city forms part of the floor over which visitors walk. Most visitors spent time identifying their houses or well-known landmarks.

Close by is a 1960s Lodekka double-decker bus on which thought-provoking stories of passengers and bus crews can be heard. Since the city was badly bombed during the second world war, this topic features strongly in displays, with evocative film complemented by objects donated by local people, including an original Anderson shelter rescued from a local back garden.

Although many museums claim to tell a "People's Story", not all can back this up with exhibitions that really do so. Here, there is much evidence of public engagement in the community-based displays around the Places gallery, which focus on a number of the well-known districts in the city such as Easton, St Pauls, Clifton and Hartcliffe. Each section includes a case of objects supported by images and words from local people.

Upstairs in the Bristol People and Bristol Life galleries, the displays teem with the stories of generations of Bristolians. Although many of the topics dealt with are familiar to local history collections such as schooling, domestic life, work and entertainment, the museum does not shy away from more controversial and challenging areas such as transatlantic slavery and Victorian child exploitation. The city has been no stranger to social unrest over its long history and the new displays provide welcome context to more recent events by telling the story of the 1831 Bristol Riots and the 1980 disturbances in St Pauls.

Perhaps the best testament to the success of M Shed is that on the two occasions I have visited, it was packed with a huge range of people, young and old, sharing experiences and memories with each other and all clearly enjoying their visit. Like many, I approached the opening of this new museum with a degree of trepidation, a result of its protracted development and the publicity surrounding its funding, but it's been worth the wait.

Tim Bryan is the head of collections and interpretation at the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon

Stories of Bristol people

I've probably visited Bristol about half a dozen times over the years, have no particular connections to the city and so didn't really have any particular expectations of M Shed. The only expectations I did have were informed by M Shed's press releases.

The £27m cost of the museum was sufficient to make it newsworthy. It is housed in a former 1950s transit shed in what's known as Bristol's cultural quarter. The museum covers the history of Bristol, and regards itself as distinct from many other museums in that it presents "many thousands of stories of the people of Bristol, which have been discovered through working with experts and communities across the city, a process that will continue for the life of the museum".

M Shed's opening, followed fast on its heels by the new Museum of Liverpool (*Museums Journal September 2011, p42*), raises a host of questions, not only about what museums of place offer, but who they're for and why. It also highlights some of the difficulties of opening during a recession.

Given that there wasn't anything in the museum that I absolutely had to see, I took the advice of a member of the museum's staff, which was to start at the top, take in the view of Bristol from the roof terrace, and work my way back downstairs through the galleries.

This was probably a mistake. The terrace was roped off at both ends – suggesting that it still ▶

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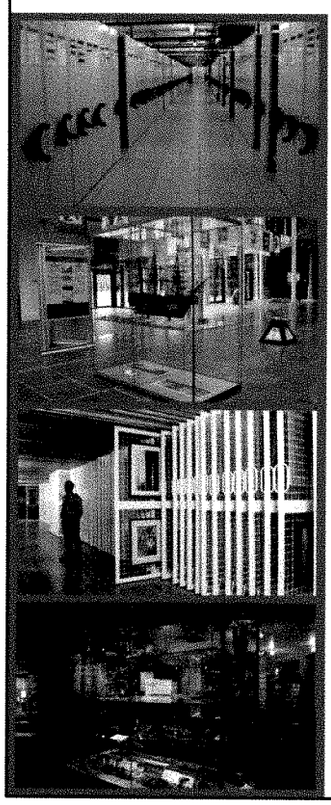

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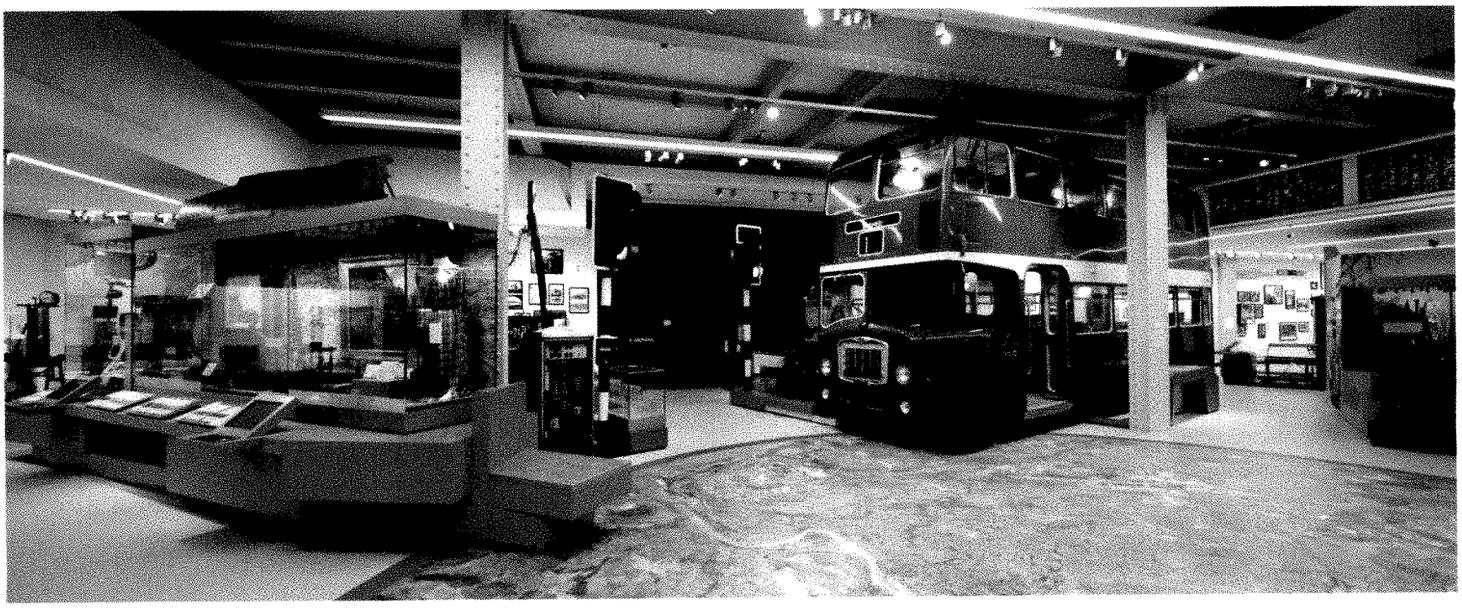


wasn't ready for visitors. There was nothing pointing out the major landmarks, or orientating visitors to the city.

Back inside the building, the second floor was more or less shut: the temporary exhibition galleries were closed [photographer Martin Parr's Bristol and West show had not yet opened] and the events space was locked. A press release promised debates and discussions, but none were announced.

One flight down, and the studio (designed to focus on "personal learning and thinking skills") and meeting room were also off limits. Outside the building, none of the "working exhibits" – cranes, railways and boats from the area's industrial past, maintained and operated by volunteers – were running when I visited.

Inside, the Bristol Lives gallery, situated at the far side of the building, was much quieter than Bristol People and Bristol Places. These galleries were packed with a multiplicity of small, thematic displays, masses of interpretation and interactives. I found it hard to steer a path though the exhibits, or to grasp more than titbits of Bristol's history. The narratives are partial, at best. Themes collide (I wasn't sure whether the overlaps between shopping, slavery and the "oldest profession", for example, were deliberate) and there are several layers of interpretation.

Bristol Places highlights the city's diversity, with small displays focusing on different areas. The central exhibits in the gallery are Bristol-wide. Several visitors were pacing around a large satellite map on the floor, locating particular sites. Another hot spot was a 1960s double-decker bus, where the oldies were sitting downstairs to chat and teenagers were congregating upstairs. There was something reassuring about people behaving the same way in the museum as they would on the street.

M Shed's tone and textures vary enormously. Some displays are relatively detached, such as those concentrating on Bristol's industries – the production of Concorde's engines, Fry's chocolate, Wills tobacco and Wallace and Gromit. Others, arguably M Shed's best, address social controversies associated with city – race, in particular.

The entrance to Bristol People is flanked by displays dedicated to slavery and the city's history of political activism. The 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott stands out. Prompted by the Bristol Omnibus Company's refusal to employ African-Caribbean or Asian crews, this drew attention to racial discrimination in Britain and contributed to the creation of the Race Relations Acts, which outlawed racial discrimination. Bristol Life also touches on the city's shameful history of race relations in its exploration of emigrants and immigrants. Incidents highlighted include the forcible expulsion of Jews in 1290, and the abduction of Inuits in 1577.

A particular difficulty of M Shed's combination of community and curatorial interventions is that such an approach generates complexities around the presentation of public history. Contemporary museums of place tend to be museums of their communities, rather than museums for their communities. The uneven quality of the museum's displays reflects a tension between its inward and outward-facing roles, between anecdote and research. Some of the community contributions feel somewhat raw, but that might change over time.

The relationship between the museum and Bristol itself is more frustrating. I'd imagined that there would be an explicit connection between the cityscape, as seen from the terrace, and the content of the displays. I wanted to be better equipped to explore the city as a result of visiting M Shed.

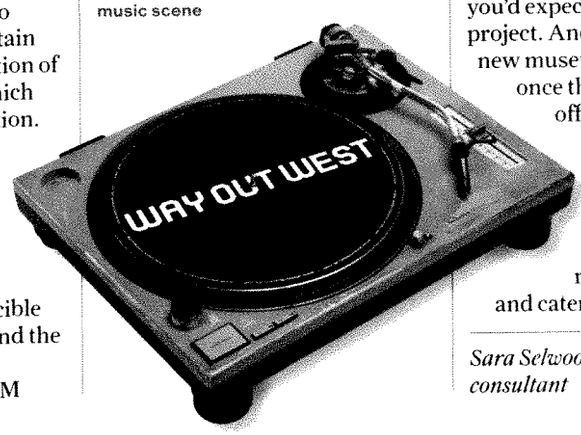
I came away thinking that M Shed has enormous unfulfilled potential. The fact that so much was under-utilised smacked of declining revenues, not what you'd expect of a new capital project. And given that visits to new museums usually decline once the novelty has worn off, the museum will have to work a bit harder to generate extra revenue from areas such as corporate hire, retailing and catering.

Sara Selwood is a museum consultant

Project data

Cost £27m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund, £11.6m; Bristol City Council; DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Improvement Fund; University of the West of England; Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives; Friends of Bristol Art Gallery
Architects LAB Architecture Studios; Bush Architects
Main contractor BAM
Exhibition design and fit-out Event Communications
Structural engineer Arup
Project management Focus Consultants
Lighting design Full-On

Above: M Shed's story of Bristol takes in its strong engineering legacy. Below: the museum also looks at the city's contribution to the UK dance music scene



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Watts Gallery, Compton, Surrey

Environmental concerns aside, *Maurice Davies* welcomes the transformation of this Surrey gallery into a fitting venue to display the work of GF Watts

Left: the Watts Gallery has been carefully and sensitively restored. Top and above: a bust of the nymph Clytie and an allegorical painting of Hope, both by GF Watts

The Watts Gallery used to be free to enter and was in such a terrible state that it was officially an English Heritage Building at Risk. Now, £11m of capital expenditure later, it's spick and span and tickets cost £7.50. Is it worth it?

Founded by the leading Victorian artist George Frederic Watts and the potter Mary Watts, the gallery opened in 1904, showcasing GF's work and housing apprentice potters. Just up the lane is a remarkable chapel designed by Mary.

After Mary's death in 1938 the gallery gradually fell asleep. It woke up when Richard Ormond, a former director of the National Maritime Museum, became chairman of the trustees and Perdita Hunt became director.

I first visited the Watts Gallery about five years ago to talk about its plan to sell works from the collection to increase the gallery's endowment. That controversial proposal eventually led to changes to the Museums Association code of ethics to permit sale from collections in exceptional circumstances. In particular, the income from the sale has to significantly increase long-term public benefit from the remaining collection.

And that is exactly what the overall transformation of the Watts Gallery has achieved. No longer a ramshackle collection of tumble-down buildings, the gallery is repaired and subtly altered, so that previously separate buildings are now linked together. The collection is the centre of attention: cleaned, conserved, properly displayed and intelligently interpreted.

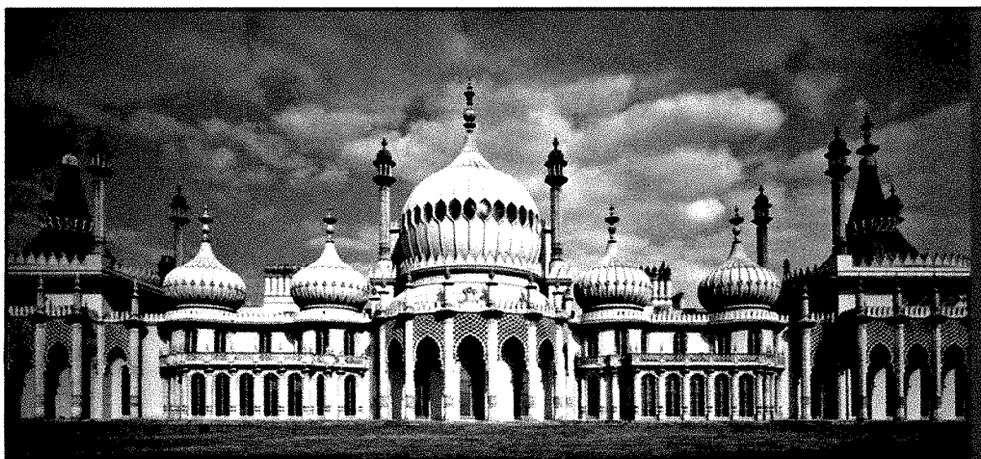
Elegant gallery guides

The collection is dominated by powerful oil paintings. In the main gallery spaces they are neatly displayed in gold frames on richly coloured walls, beneath a high gold ceiling. But curator Mark Bills has skilfully avoided creating a ghastly Tim Clifford-style symmetrical heritage hang.

The pictures are arranged by theme and the hang varies undogmatically. Instead of individual labels next to each picture, information is provided in elegant hardback books, which illustrate each work in colour next to 100 or so words of text.

Visitors stroll round the gallery, book in hand, taking time to read, look, discuss and think, encouraged by friendly volunteer room guides. One of the nicest features of the gallery is the murmur of visitor conversation.

In other parts of the building, such as the temporary exhibition gallery (full of loans from Tate) and the gallery devoted to GF's ▶



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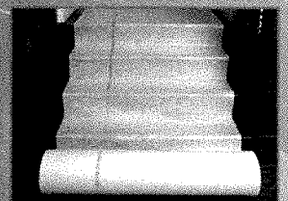

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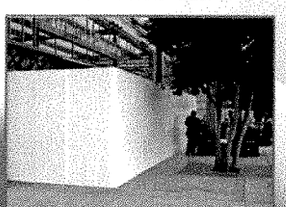

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life, interpretation uses graphic panels and individual object labels. They, too, are well written and informative, with an unpatronising seriousness of intent. A children's guide is promised soon, but as yet there's little for little ones apart from the collection itself, which, like most Victorian art, is fairly accessible.

Local community

The highlight is Physical Energy, a larger-than-life sculpture of a figure on a horse. Mounted on train tracks so Watts could work on it outdoors, it dominates the sculpture gallery. This space exemplifies the approach taken by architects ZMMA.

There has been plenty of careful conservation, but rather than slavishly recreate all aspects of the original, it has made modern interventions such as huge glass doors and a chic slightly polished concrete floor. Elsewhere are modern balustrades and newly designed ceilings. The main bit of new build is hung all over with wood shingles and has a modish, almost brutalist, 1970s-retro wood-shuttered concrete chimney for the gallery's new kiln, which is adjacent to the learning studio.

The Watts Gallery makes a pleasant, comfortable visit. A smart middle-class, middle-aged woman was dozing happily, lying full-length on a bench by the gallery entrance. The teashop was packed, staff struggling to cope with demand.

The gallery feels part of its local (posh) community, with its thousands of well-heeled friends and volunteers. Less lucky locals benefit from ambitious learning and outreach programmes, including ones for prisoners, reformed drug and alcohol users and rough sleepers. The gallery has a trainee curator and works with City and Guilds to train conservators. It is currently organising sponsored swims to raise funds to support an apprentice potter.

Project data

Cost £11m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £4.9m; English Heritage
Architect ZMMA

Above: the Watts Gallery manages to be both urban and rural simultaneously. Below and below left: interpretation is unpatronising and informative

© RICHARD BRYANT/ARCAIDIMAGES.COM

Like many of the best museums with a nationally important collection, the Watts Gallery is both local and international, simultaneously serving schoolchildren and overseas scholars. It's also somehow urban and rural. Watts can be seen as a great modern urban artist, tackling themes such as child prostitution, homelessness and suicides in the Thames. He ended up living – and building his gallery – in the Surrey hills. In the 21st century, the carefully managed countryside (the North Downs Way passes the gallery) contrasts with the constant whoosh of speeding traffic (the A3 is also close by).

Carbon concerns

Admirably, the gallery website bends over backwards to tell you all the different ways that you could get to the gallery apart from using a car. (It is done so well I was almost tempted to set off there on foot.) Unfortunately, the packed car park of around 50 spaces, with overspill parking across the road, tells the truth about how most people travel to and through rural Surrey.

My concern about carbon emissions didn't stop there. The gallery is stuffed with energy-hungry halogen lighting (why not LEDs?) and for some crackpot reason, allegedly to do with government indemnity, it's got air-conditioning. Given that the collection has survived for 100 years in damp, leaking, sometimes freezing conditions, that seems a tad unnecessary. There's a ground source heat pump, but the gallery might need to organise a lot more sponsored swims to pay for all the electricity.

I don't know who recommended all the energy-hungry kit – but I do know that I've been to a few recently opened buildings supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) that seem to use far more energy than before they were refurbished. This is in spite of HLF's expressed desire for greener projects.

To end on a happier note, as the gallery was about to reopen, the Watts's house, Limnerslease, came on the market, just over the road. The gallery is trying to buy it and open it. This would give visitors an even better experience of gallery, chapel and house. I wish them well – as long as they don't do any more to increase their energy consumption.

Maurice Davies is the head of policy and communication at the Museums Association

Holburne Museum, Bath

The Holburne Museum has been reinvigorated by an extension that opens up the building and its collections. By *Nicky Ryan*

Facing page: the extension is a transparent glass pavilion. Below and above right: substantial architectural interventions to the museum's Georgian home have created new opportunities for display

© PAUL RIDDLE (ALL IMAGES)

As I was sipping latte and eating sourdough toast in the Garden Cafe of the remodelled and extended Holburne Museum, the slogan "an ace caff with quite a nice museum attached" came to mind. This strapline, conceived by Saatchi & Saatchi as part of its 1988 advertising campaign to promote the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), attracted widespread criticism. Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, the director of the V&A at the time, was accused of dumbing down and promoting entertainment at the expense of institutional integrity.

A couple of decades later, it is common for cultural venues to dedicate prime space to catering. Museum cafes have taken on the role of the 18th-century coffee house, acting as a hub of social activity, a place in which to see and be seen.

The Garden Cafe at the Holburne Museum fills the ground floor of Eric Parry Architects' three-storey extension. With its stylish interior decor and 180-degree view of the surrounding landscape, the cafe is the heart of what is a very modern intervention into one of Bath's

landmark Grade-I-listed Georgian attractions.

The new building is a transparent glazed pavilion intersected by moulded ceramic fins finished in a mottled blue and green. Designed to reflect the changing colours and patterns of light and landscape, the extension provides a modern counterpoint to the classical appearance of the original building. Initially, the project was delayed by objections to its form and cladding but record attendance figures (20,00 visitors in the first month after reopening in May) point to great interest from visitors.

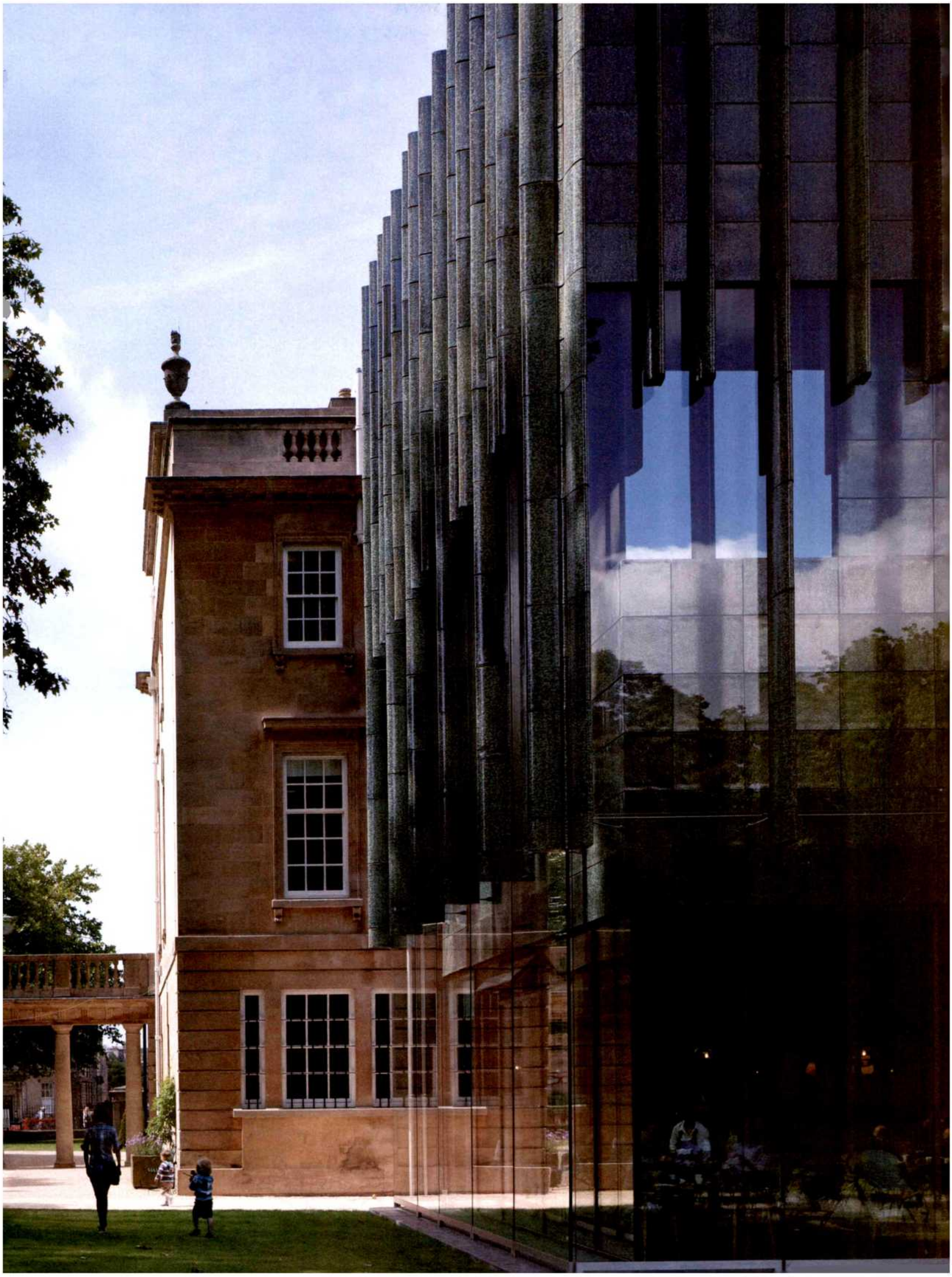
Social spaces

The centrality of the cafe to the museum experience does not signify any downgrading of the 4,000-item collection donated to the city of Bath by 19th-century naval officer William Holburne. And it is not evidence of unrestrained commercialism on the part of the Holburne Museum, although opportunities to raise revenue through corporate and private entertainment are crucial for the survival of such establishments.

Instead, the importance of the cafe to the £11.2m renovation project resides in its role in the reorientation of the building to the gardens and the revival of the kind of social activities that once gave the place its particular character and identity.

Holburne Museum was originally built as a tavern by Charles Harcourt Masters in 1795 and later extended to offer accommodation. The Sydney Hotel, as it was known, provided a focal point to the vista at the end of Great Pultney Street and a gateway into the commercially run Sydney Pleasure Gardens. It served the function of casino and entry pavilion into a hexagonally shaped and picturesque landscape of grottoes, labyrinth and follies.

This speculative development ▶



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MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Museum Practice online

published on the 15th monthly at www.museumsassociation.org/mp

Coming up in the next online issues of MP:

August: Retail

Simon Stephens explores how museums can raise income through their shops and websites. Articles include retail design on a budget, e-commerce and partnership working. Retail consultant Chris Walton offers her advice on what makes a good museum shop. There are also case studies from a number of museums and the chance for museums to submit their own case studies.

September: Visually-impaired visitors

Rebecca Atkinson looks at how museums can engage with visually-impaired visitors. This issue of Museum Practice explores some of the barriers to engagement and offers practical guidance on how museums and galleries can become more inclusive. Case studies include audio descriptive tours, touch tours, object handling and the use of new technology.

MP

All MA members and subscribers to MP get access to MP online. Log in online now at www.museumsassociation.org/mp to view MP. If you are not registered on the site, it only takes a few minutes, and you will then have access to MP and much more.

was part of Bath's transformation in the latter half of the 18th century into a city increasingly visited by tourists for its fashionable entertainment as well as hot springs and architecture. The Sydney Hotel and Gardens became a meeting point and leisure destination for the growing middle classes of Bath and wealthy visitors from mainland Europe.

Historical setting

Parry's extension and internal remodelling of Holburne Museum draws on the history of the site as a hotel to create a threshold between inside and outside where people meet, eat, wait, observe and socialise. The ground floor of the Sydney Hotel was originally used for breakfasts, coffee drinking, reading and playing cards, with the rear elevation providing a focus for firework displays, musical and theatrical performances and illuminations at night. Events hosted by the museum include concerts of baroque music, piano recitals and a "cinema under the stars", indicating that the traditions of the hotel and pleasure garden are being continued.

Hotels, like museums, have an important relationship with the city and serve a variety of purposes in addition to their more obvious function as sites of hospitality. Throughout their history the role of the hotel has included that of urban landmark, symbol of civic pride and as flagship in regeneration strategies designed to attract tourists. Today, many chic hotels are transforming themselves into public spaces by displaying art and hosting temporary exhibitions, thereby taking on some of the functions of the museum. Parry reverses this process by playing with the idea of museum as hotel in order to reinvigorate the Holburne as a social space and underline its Georgian lineage.

In 1916 the Sydney Hotel was reconfigured by Reginald Blomfield as a museum to house William Holburne's collection of paintings, bronzes, silver, porcelain, miniatures, ivories, fans, cameos, embroideries, medals, enamels and furniture. Today, items from the collector's study occupy the double-height void in the intermediate floors of the new extension.

Project data

Cost £11.2m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund; Linbury Trust
Architect Eric Parry Architects
Main contractor Sir Robert McAlpine
Exhibition design Metaphor
Interactive design All of Us
Display cases Meyvaert
Lighting Kevan Shaw Lighting Design
Project management Cragg Management Services
Structural engineer Momentum
Mechanical and electrical engineer Atelier Ten
Collection storage and transport Oxford Exhibition Services

Intensity

In a reworking of the idea of a cabinet of curiosities, a sense of wonder is evoked by a dense and idiosyncratic display that is reminiscent of Sir John Soane's London house at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Exhibition designer Metaphor has reinterpreted artefacts throughout the building, bringing drama and intensity to the exhibits.

The renovation includes new facilities such as the cafe, shop, library, archive and education rooms. There is also an increase in display space and the provision of a top-lit gallery for temporary exhibitions.

Peter Blake's A Museum of My Own was the first temporary exhibition after the revamp, and was probably the most disappointing element of the project. At the Museum of Everything in Primrose Hill, London, Blake used his collection to create a wonderfully strange and quirky display, so I expected something playful, personal and eccentric at the Holburne. But a minimalist style of presentation in a room of icy temperatures and grey lighting drained Blake's collection and artworks of any exuberance.

The extension to Holburne Museum is a bold architectural gesture in a Unesco-protected site where the convention has been to adopt a form of classical pastiche that blends into the existing urban fabric. The new building has expanded the museum; increased its potential as a tourist attraction; and, by referencing its heritage as former hotel and gateway to the adjacent landscape, provided a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider area and the unique pleasure gardens.

Nicky Ryan is programme director at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts, London

Above right: the museum's first temporary exhibition was by the artist Peter Blake.
Below: the density of displays at the Holburne Museum are reminiscent of Sir John Soane's Museum

© HUGO GLENDINNING (BLAKE MASK), ANDREW PUTLER/METAPHOR (INTERIOR)

Books

Teaching in the Art Museum: Interpretation as Experience

Gillian Wolfe on an earnest study of the history and theory of education in US art museums

Authors Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee, museum educators at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, respectively, consider it time for museum education to have a pedagogy of its own and they set out to provide a framework for such in 11 freestanding essays that do not have to be read sequentially. They provide a history and theory of the subject by describing museum education from an American perspective. They focus almost exclusively on the education of adults in art museums, possibly because they feel that sufficient attention has been lavished on the very young and they want to redress the balance.

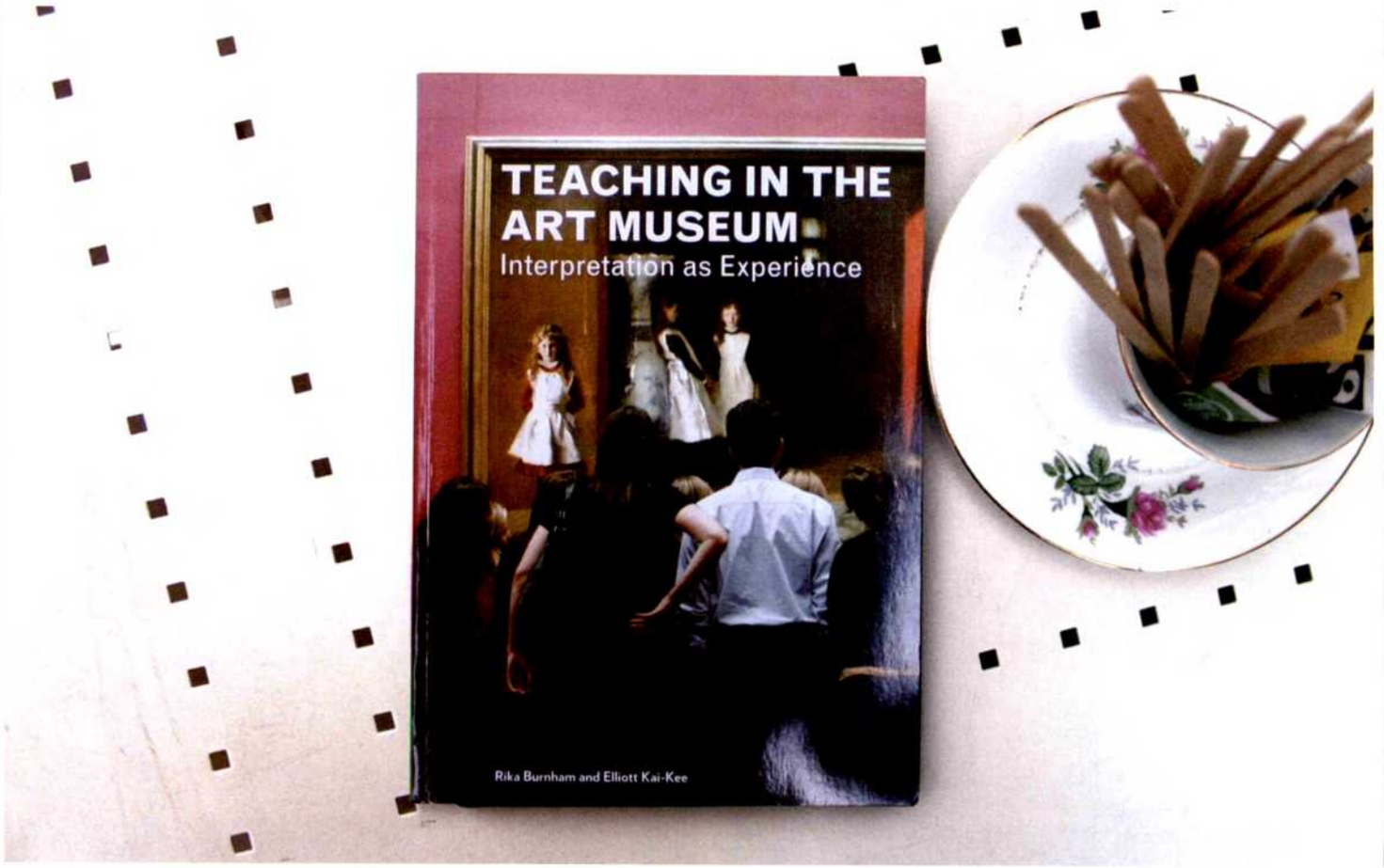
This earnest endeavour looks at the development of teaching about art in the US over the past 100 years, starting with a didactic approach, then relaxing into more varied methods.

They emphasise the importance of flexibility and intuition necessary for good teaching. The balance between the giving of information and the asking of questions to seek response is a theme constantly revisited by the authors. While distrusting reliance on the questioning technique, they conclude that a cautious mixture of both is generally useful according to the nature of those being taught, a horses-for-courses pragmatism.

References and footnotes are copious throughout all chapters and the index is particularly comprehensive, demonstrating the most detailed research. It provides a useful catalogue of alternative sources of information on the subject.

The book does not attempt to deal with more challenging audiences, such as those brought to the art museum who are not predisposed to be interested, special-needs groups, the elderly, or those with language barriers in multicultural groupings. Instead, the concentration is entirely on those students involved in courses or interested adults. Teaching conversations are reported exactly as they happened in the galleries to illustrate the precise interaction between teacher and student.

A need for clear goals is stressed whatever system of learning is espoused with



a quotation from former Metropolitan Museum of Art director Philippe de Montebello, who saw the need to "delight, instruct and uplift". The 17th-century painter Gerrit Dou famously said that art should "delight, amuse, deceive and instruct", a useful warning against over-interpretation.

Elliott Kai-Kee's historical overview is pertinent in these relativistic days when all the major artistic canons are regarded as equally valid or at least worthy. The book reminds us not to push aside the insights of art historians, curators and academics.

Eilean Hooper Greenhill, a doyenne of museum education, makes a crucial point that "personal interpretations are forged through cultural frameworks", something that should not be overlooked. These authors make the case that it is only through scholarly insights in the hands of accomplished teachers that the objective of critical analysis and deep appreciation can be achieved.

The authors take the teaching of art very seriously and are committed to a "dialogical" method that will only result in failure if attempts are made to "simplify the subtle art of gallery teaching". Yet everyone of us has come across the charismatic teacher, someone with such a talent for communication that they somehow change us forever – these are the teachers we never forget. Such teachers, and they come from all backgrounds, have a special gift that is instinctive, despite theories, systems and philosophies. They have the extraordinary knack of passing on passion and joy, and inspiring others to want to find out more for themselves. That magical delivery is what makes a star teacher and that quality, in all its many guises, may defy analysis.

This book will interest museum studies students and museum educators and may lead to hot debate from the UK's rather different cultural perspective.

By Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee, Getty Publications, £21, 978-1-60606-058-2

Gillian Wolfe is the director of learning and public affairs at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

On my bookshelf

Janita Bagshawe

Brighton and Hove: City Guides (Pevsner Architectural Guides), by Nicholas Antram and Richard Morrice

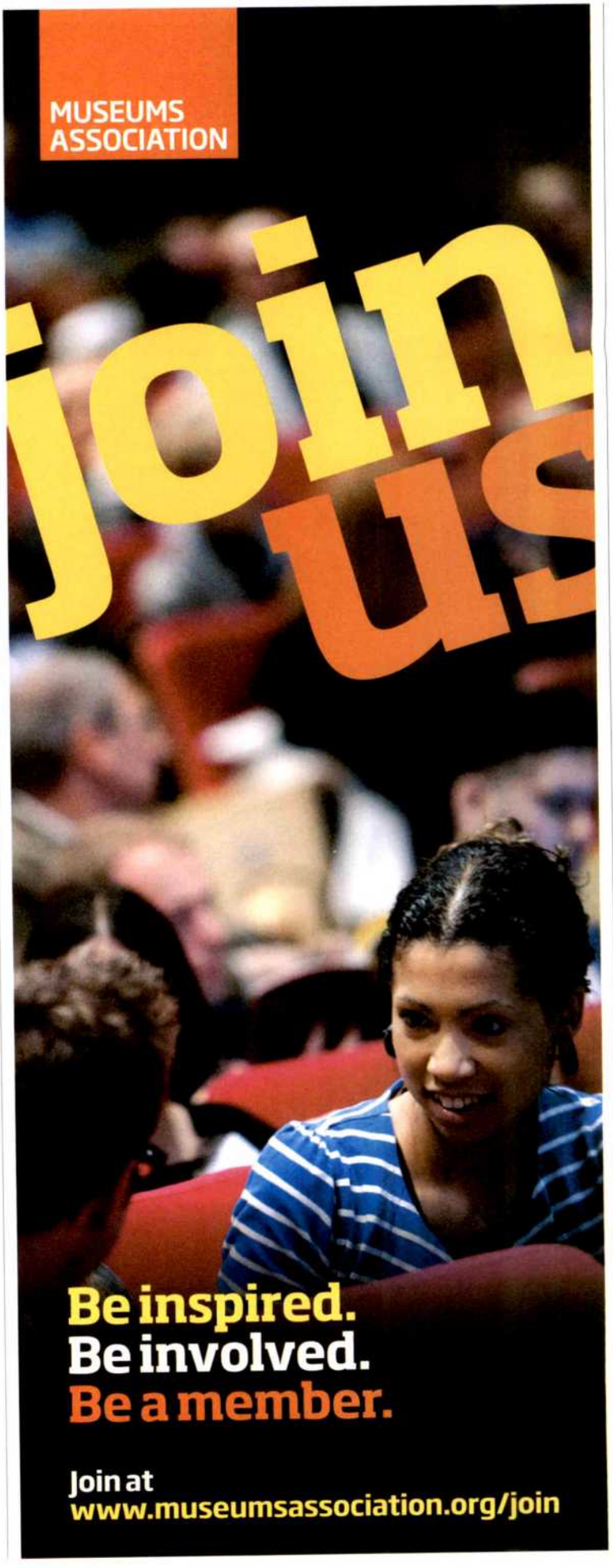
When Niklaus Pevsner wrote about Brighton in 1965 in the Sussex county guide it was a sizeable entry. But now in this new series, "The Queen of Watering Places" has her own dedicated guide, expanding on Pevsner's original work.

As a comprehensive beginner's guide to the history of Brighton and Hove and its architecture, it is a handy reference book to refer to on questions about the city's heritage without having to search through a whole raft of books written about the city. The book also acts as a reminder to me that it isn't just the Royal Pavilion and Preston Manor that are part of the architectural fabric and history of the city, but that our other museum sites and related buildings are seen that way, too.

Perhaps this is best illustrated by the entry on the Dome, which, to my delight on first reading, I found a mention of the education pavilion that was built as part of the Brighton Museum redevelopment in 2002.

The guide gives more than an architectural account: it succeeds in enlightening what is the essence of Brighton – exotic, regal, raffish, tolerant, arty, irreverent– the spirit that is encapsulated in the best of its architecture and underpins the city's reputation and drives much of the Royal Pavilion and Museum's work.

Janita Bagshawe is the head of Museums and Royal Pavilion, Brighton. She is a theme coordinator at this year's Museums Association conference in Brighton (3-4 October). www.museumsassociation.org/conference



Profile Anne Moore: bagpipe curator

Anne Moore is the museums officer (North Northumberland) for the Woodhorn Charitable Trust, responsible for Berwick Museum & Art Gallery and the Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum. She has learned to play the instrument and is a vice president of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society.

What are your museums like?
They are very different and 60 miles apart. A lot of visitors wonder why there's a bagpipe museum in Morpeth, but we have our own Northumbrian pipes; Scotland was actually one of the last places to adopt them. Berwick is a mixture of social history and a mini-Burrell collection and I took it on as a result of local authority reorganisation. It needed work; the front-of-house wasn't very welcoming and the exhibition galleries had been used for storage. One had, in fact, been kitted out as a theatre with black walls and ceilings like a teenage goth's bedroom.

So what did you do?
The Effective Collections programme came at exactly the right moment for us. A specialist social history consultant worked with us through the accumulated stuff which hadn't been properly catalogued. As we are not too far away from Beamish, the Living Museum of the North East, some decisions came quite easily about things that were not specific to the town. There looked to be some interesting archaeology, but it was spread over three or four rooms. Some cup- and ring-marked stones were just shoved into a corner when they should have been on display.

And just when you were getting on top of things...
We were flooded. We are in an old Hawksmoor building with a double roof and a channel running across the middle. We think it was a seagull's nest that blocked the drains, which overflowed into the store room. The water missed the really important things because we had freed up so much space.

Anne Moore used Effective Collections funding to catalogue artefacts

Don't you have "previous" in this area?
In Morpeth, we were hit by the massive floods of 2008. We had water coming from all directions into the Chantry building, a refurbished 13th-century bridge chapel which has also been a school, a cafe and a ladies' loo. The museum is on the first floor with the reserve collection at ground level and we were moving stuff upstairs as the room was filling with water. We were told to leave when it was three-feet deep outside. There were helicopters rescuing people from roofs and canoes in the high street.

Are you the new Kathryn Tickell on the pipes?
I can demonstrate where all the bits go and what they sound like together. I thought it was important to be able to play a tune rather than going around simply pointing at things I didn't really understand.

Moves

Plymouth University sociologist **Marta Herrero** has been appointed as academic adviser at the Yorkshire Air Museum and Allied Air Forces Memorial, Elvington.

Sandy Richardson joins the V&A at Dundee project as development director this month. He was previously head of development at National Museums Scotland.

John Scarlett, former chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, will become the chairman of the Bletchley Park Trust, in January 2012. His predecessor, **Francis Richards**, a former governor of Gibraltar, takes over the chairmanship of the board of trustees at the Imperial War Museum from **Peter Squire** on 19 December.

New trustees for the National Museum of Science and Industry: **Athene Donald**, professor of experimental physics, Cambridge University; **Andreas Goss**, Siemens chief executive; life peer and chairman of Pinewood Shepperton **Michael Grade**; and **Ludmilla Jordanova**, early modern history professor at King's College, London.

Appointments to boards: **Jonathan Watkins**, director of the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, has joined the board of the Imperial War Museum; **John Micklethwait**, editor-in-chief of the Economist, joins the British Museum's board; and banker **C Allegra Berman** joins the board of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Marta Herrero

Sandy Richardson

The following have been reappointed as trustees: **Mark Getty** at the National Gallery, London; the **Duke of Devonshire**; designer **Jasper Conran**, **Jagdip Jagpal**, managing director of Anareva recruitment; art dealer **Adrian Sassoon**; and journalist **Richard Dorment** at the Wallace Collection, London; and **Edmund Browne**, life peer and president of the Royal Academy of Engineering; and BBC director for emerging territories **Monisha Shah** at the Tate Gallery, London.

Five new commissioners have been appointed to English Heritage: life peer and chairwoman of Think Positive, Age Well **Lola Young**; academic **Peter Draper**; freelance non-executive **Tim Laurence**; businessman **Martin Moore**; and architect **Graham Morrison**.

Who got the job?

Heather Michelle Pearce

Museum development officer, South Wales Miners Museum, Cynonville
Salary: £24,646-£25,472
Advertised: MJ, November 2010

What does the job entail?
I have to be a jack of all trades. I deal with the daily correspondence, administration and routine tasks, which include opening the doors, dusting the cabinets, rotating the displays and vacuuming the floor. I give guided tours and take school visits while, behind the scenes, I apply for grant funding and am currently working with a volunteer to create an online shop.
Other jobs onsite manager, Cefn Coed Colliery Museum.
Qualifications BA hons ancient history and archaeology.

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This is a senior management post and as head of the Collections section, you will have the opportunity to contribute to key initiatives for the Gallery's current £6 million redevelopment. During the period when the Gallery is relocated off-site, you will have the opportunity to work at Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales, Cardiff, for a period of up to two years. Expertise in the conservation of easel paintings is essential for this position, together with experience of general collections care and preventative conservation. A good team worker with excellent interpersonal skills, you will have the ability to prioritise effectively and supervise the work of others.

For an informal discussion, please contact Jenni Spencer-Davies, Curator on 01792 516900.

Exhibitions & Events Officer

Culture & Tourism (Swansea Museum)
£19,621 - £21,519 per annum **Ref: RG0900**

Swansea Museum is searching for an inspirational, experienced and committed Museum professional to lead our Exhibitions team.

To work as part of a team at Swansea Museum to provide high quality cultural and heritage services which inspire, empower learning and which provide enjoyment for all! The post-holder will organise a programme of changing exhibitions and events to encourage return visits, to increase public access to the reserve collections and to enhance the community's interest in different aspects of Swansea's heritage and culture, to organise marketing opportunities for the museum, its services and the changing exhibitions and events to help achieve increased visits.

For an informal discussion, please contact Garethe El Tawab, Curator on 01792 477201.

Closing date for both posts: 13 October 2011, 5pm.

Apply immediately online or tel: (01792) 636875

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Salary: £23k per annum

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For further information and an application form:
www.hallplace.org.uk

Closing date: Monday 14 November 2011
Interviews: Monday 28 November 2011

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Curator

New museum for children and families

Qatar Museum Authority, Qatar
Salary dependent on experience

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To apply, send a detailed cover letter and CV via email to **recruitment@qma.org.qa**

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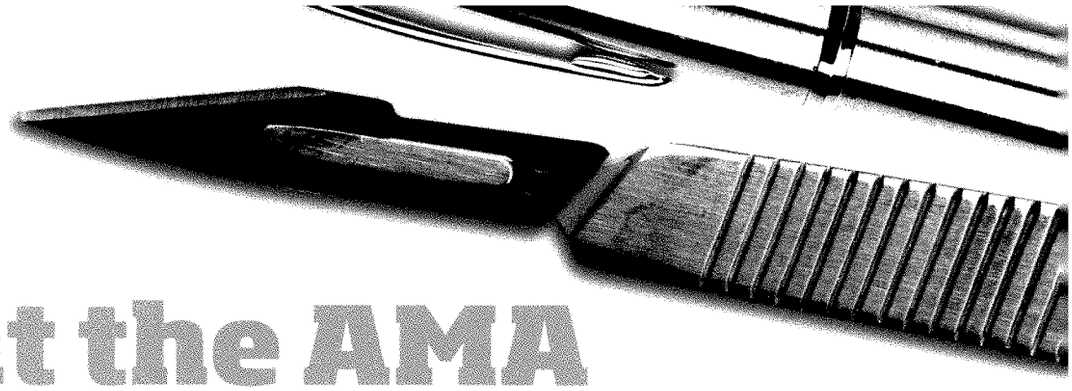

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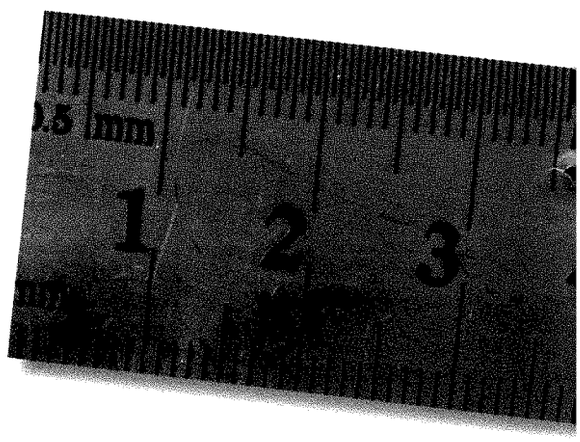
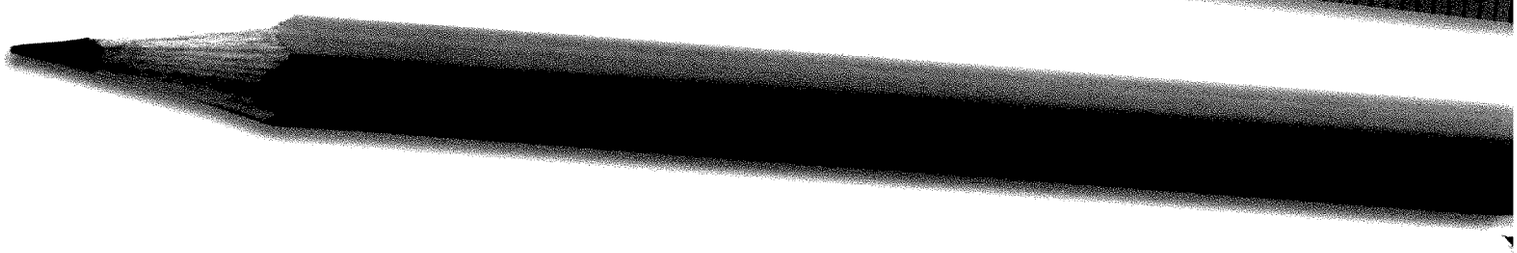
Now is the time to think again.





The revised AMA still holds the same status it always did but it is now more accessible to everyone working in or for museums and has closer ties to the workplace.

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Take a look at our website for more details and discover the AMA for you.
www.museumsassociation.org/ama

Acquisitions: The Dentist, a portrait by artist John Lavery, has been purchased by the British Dental Association's Museum, the UK's only museum dedicated to dentistry

A Viking-era sapphire ring, found at York and declared Treasure, has been acquired by York Museums

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, has bought The Dead Christ Supported by the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene by Marcantonio Bassetti

© KIPPA MATTHEWS (RING)

Find an object

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loan throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales offers seven wooden-bodied **coal wagons** from the Big Pit: National Coal Museum, Blaenavon, to an accredited museum. Most of the wagons are in a poor condition and need re-timbering.
Contact: Carolyn Charles
tel: 02920 573575
email: carolyn.charles@museumwales.ac.uk

● Artist Peter Foston offers several paintings depicting British **maritime scenes** and ships to interested museums and galleries free of charge. Details available on request.
Contact: Peter Foston
email: peter@foston.org

● Compton Verney wishes to dispose of the following items: a round sycamore wood table, early 19th century; a round tripod table, late 18th/early 19th century; trestle-table, 19th century; West Country four-legged stool; two brass lamp bases c. 1900; a **wooden mash tub**, c. 1890; and a painted metal footbath, c. 1850.
Contact: Morgan Jones
tel: 01926 645 548
email: morgan.jones@comptonverney.org.uk

● The Fashion Museum, Bath, wishes to dispose of a number of items to accredited museums. These include 19th-century wicker and **mahogany swinging cradle**; a Victorian shop counter; and a 1930s wooden shoe-shine stool. Full details on request.
Contact: Elaine Uttley
tel: 01225 477733
email: elaine_uttley@bathnes.gov.uk

● Coventry Transport Museum has a number of transport-related items for disposal. These include a small number of cars and **motorcycles**, and a collection of vehicle components. List available on request.
Contact: Steve Bagley
tel: 02476 234270
email: steve.bagley@transport-museum.co.uk

● Lancashire County Museum Service wishes to dispose of two textile industry-related items: a Robert Hall Wool beamer; and a **two-for-one twister** with multiple heads.
Contact: Lis Chard
tel: 01772 535174
email: elisabeth.chard@lancashire.gov.uk

● Lincolnshire County Council offers a small range of late 19th/early 20th-century industrial and **agricultural objects** in a variety of conditions along with a number of early 20th-century furniture items. List on request. This offer is open until 1 November.
Contact: Alan Popper
tel: 01522 552236
email: Alan.Popper@lincolnshire.gov.uk

● Southampton Museum offers **free showcases** to museums. They are available from 25 September. Recipient to collect.
Contact: Kirsty Bell email: kirsty.bell@southampton.gov.uk

Acquisitions

● Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales has acquired Christopher Wood's **The Rug Seller, Tréboul**. It is on view at National Museum Cardiff. The painting was bought from the Brecknock Art Trust for £190,000, with the support of £50,000 from the Art Fund; the Cardiff-based Derek Williams Trust (£55,000); and an anonymous donor (£30,000).

● The Dentist, a portrait by artist John Lavery, has been purchased by the British Dental Association's (BDA) Museum, the UK's only museum dedicated exclusively to **dentistry**. The 1929 work features dentist Conrad Ackner treating his patient, the artist's wife, Lady Lavery. An appeal for help in raising the £60,000 required for the purchase saw donations from individuals and BDA branches. The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Art Fund also awarded grants.

● The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, has bought a rare 17th-century painting on slate by Baroque artist **Marcantonio Bassetti**. The Dead Christ Supported by the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene was acquired with the support of the Art Fund, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Gow Fund.

The Galleries of Justice Museum, Nottingham, has scooped a Sandford Award

● Hampshire Record Office has purchased an album containing over 100 mid-19th century drawings of **Wellow**, depicting local landscapes, named cottages, people and details of everyday life. With the help of Hampshire Archives Trust, £12,000 was raised to keep the album in the county. An appeal raised over £1,500 from members of the public and donations from Wellow Parish Council, local history groups and the Trust itself. This was supplemented by grants of £6,000 from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and £2,000 from the Friends of the National Libraries.

John Lavery's portrait of a dentist in action has been bought by the British Dental Association's Museum

● Norfolk Museums has recently bought an 18th-century **delftware plate** depicting the Norwich woodworker, Charles Cordy. The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund provided support.

● York Museums Trust has received a grant from the Purchase Grant Fund to acquire a **Viking ring** found near York, which has been declared Treasure. A very high-status piece, the ring supports the role of York as England's second capital and the importance of the area in the 10th and 11th centuries.

Funding

● The Friends of Horsham Museum have been awarded a £45,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant for a multi-strand project to preserve, catalogue and digitise and archive of more than **250 posters**. The posters, which span 150 years, cover everything from the theft of a fat sheep to a town band concert. They will be used for a series of websites, exhibitions, talks, publications and workshops.

● The Wisbech and Fenland Museum has received £6,000 from the Clore Duffield Foundation for Poetry and Literature to run a contest to find the **Young Poet Laureate for Fenland**. Working with the local arts organisation, Atelier East, and local schools, the museum will engage young writers in the Fenland area. There will be classroom packs, poetry days at four Fenland museums and a publication. The foundation, which offers two funding rounds each year to 2015, will be distributing a total of £1m.
www.cloreduffield.org.uk

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 02074266940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Museums Association Annual Conference & Exhibition
3-4 October 2011, Brighton Centre, Brighton
This year's MA conference comes at a time of huge change for the sector with the transition from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to Arts Council England (ACE) and the development of national strategies for museums in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The themes of conference reflect this turbulent period and the desire to grapple with the difficulties and opportunities that we face.

Keynote speakers include Ed Vaizey, minister for culture; Tim Smit, chief executive of the Eden Project, Cornwall; ACE's chief operating officer Althea Afunshile; and Green party leader and Brighton Pavilion MP Caroline Lucas.

A Museum Practice seminar programme, designed to offer practical and case-study led content, will run alongside the conference.

The 26 seminars are free and each lasts for 45 minutes. Topics include: pest control; copyright; commercial opportunities; Accreditation; and digital innovations. Entry is on a first-come-first-served basis, so please make sure you arrive in good time to avoid disappointment.
For more information, visit: www.museumsassociation.org/conference

© BDA MUSEUM (DENTIST). © RON MCCOMBE (EXTREME FORAGING)

Awards

● The Air Raid Shelters, Hat Works Museum and Bramall Hall, Stockport; the Galleries of Justice Museum and the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law, Nottingham; and the Canal Museum, London, have won **Sandford Awards for Heritage Education**. The scheme is designed to encourage those running museums, cathedrals, galleries and other historical sites to offer specific cultural and educational opportunities to visiting schoolchildren.

● London's Dulwich Picture Gallery's education department has been awarded an **Arts and Health Award** 2011 for its Good Times: Art for Older People project. A consortium of museums and galleries operating under Renaissance North West also won an award for the Who Cares? project, which has been exploring the value of access to heritage collections in promoting well-being and social inclusion among people affected by mental health issues.

● Photographer Ron McCombe has been highly commended for his image Extreme Foraging, in the Behaviour: Birds category of the Natural History Museum (NHM), London, and **Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photographer of the Year**. Paul Goldstein was highly commended for his image Taking Flight, in the Behaviour: Birds category. Andy Rouse was highly commended for his image, Making an impression, in the Behaviour: Mammals category, and Ross Hoddinott was highly commended for his Territorial Strut, in the Animal Portraits category.

Gerardus Mercator's map of Europe is among key British Library texts now available for iPad

Above: Ron McCombe has been highly commended in the Natural History Museum and the Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photographer of the Year awards. Above righ: the Friends of Horsham Museum have received a grant to digitise an archive of posters

Web news

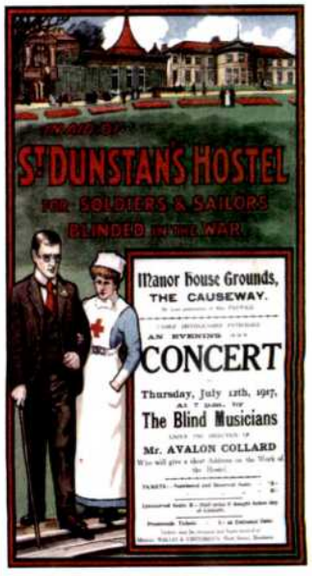
● The British Library, London, has launched its eBook Treasures series for iPad tablets, starting with Leonardo da Vinci's **Codex Arundel**. For a fee, users will be able to download entire manuscripts in high-definition resolution.
www.bl.uk/ebooktreasures

● The **SHARE** Museums East website is now live.
www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk

● The new website for the **National Football Museum**, which opens in 2012 in Manchester, is now online.
http://nationalfootballmuseum.com

Miscellaneous

● Eight design teams have been chosen from 114 entries to go onto the shortlist in the Riba competition to redevelop the **Windermere Steamboat Museum**, Cumbria. The Lakeland Arts Trust recently secured initial support for a £7.4m Heritage Lottery Fund bid, including £494,000 development funding, to take the project forward.
www.steamboats.org.uk/riba-competition



● The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has appointed ZMMA to design its new **Europe 1600-1800** Galleries.

● The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's **cultural property work** transfers to Arts Council England on 3 October.
Contact: Gerry McQuillan, Arts Council England, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ
tel: 020 7973 5108 ext 205108
email: gerry.mcquillan@artscouncil.org.uk

Mentor Refresher
2 November 2011, London
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to receive an update on any developments in the scheme and a chance to share information.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Introduction to mentoring
2 November 2011, London
A workshop for anyone who is committed to CPD and wants to mentor for the AMA. We guide you through all stages in the process.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Getting the most out of the AMA
23 November 2011, Edinburgh
A workshop for anyone undertaking, or thinking of undertaking, the Associate of the Museums Association (AMA). The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. The afternoon session will explore updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants can come for the day or the afternoon.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Culture minister Ed Vaizey is a keynote speaker at this month's Museums Association conference

London members' meeting
5 December 2011, British Museum, London
The latest in the MA's series of free members' meetings, which are designed to keep members informed and give them more input in the policies and direction of the association. Held at the British Museum, this event runs from 10am-4pm and is open to all MA members living and working in London. It is free of charge for all Individual, Institutional and Corporate Members to attend.
For more information, visit www.museumsassociation.org/events

Nao Matsunaga: Lost and Found (Standing Stone and Rest of My Life), 2011, British Ceramics Biennial, Stoke-on-Trent

Jeremy Theophilus

"I like work that often challenges or disturbs before it actually appeals to me and this is a great example. It's slightly unsettling and you feel compelled to keep looking in order to work it all out.

There's a clear sense here of someone who is able to manipulate the tension that exists between controlling an essentially uncontrollable material and giving it the leeway to move and fold naturally.

Nao Matsunaga was born in Osaka and, as a cultural 'outsider', he's responding to neolithic influences that we recognise but that he would not have experienced back home in Japan.

Jeremy Theophilus is the co-director of the British Ceramics Biennial

He has also studied architecture and you can see in the tripod of branches a reference to an archway.

The British Ceramics Biennial is all about the old and the new. The idea grew out of the city council's long-term plan to regenerate the centre of Stoke. I think the authorities had taken their eye off the ball, as the ceramics industry was declining and were unsure how to react.

When we did the first show in 2009, a lot of people in the city didn't know what a biennial was; many saw it only in relation to trade fairs but they have kept the faith.

We are concentrating activities on the former Spode factory site, a fantastic industrial space that is now owned by the local authority. There has been a lot of bureaucracy involved and our nerves were jangling as we endeavoured to clean it out, install electrics, make sure it was asbestos-free and secure it for three or four different shows of new work such as this piece.

It's a big task and we're doing it on half the budget we had last time around.

These remain difficult times for the council, having to manage how this event is seen by the taxpayers and wider world while it lays people off.

Slowly but surely, however, a lot of the industry is beginning to realise what a biennial is and what it can do for them. There is some money about, probably thanks to the Royal Wedding.

The industry will never recapture its former glories but the Portmeirion company, which bought the old Spode brand, for example, has brought the manufacture of its blue ware back to Stoke from the Far East.

It recognised the quality was better and it simply had to be made in the Potteries once again."

Interview by John Holt.
The British Ceramics Biennial is at venues across Stoke-on-Trent until 13 November

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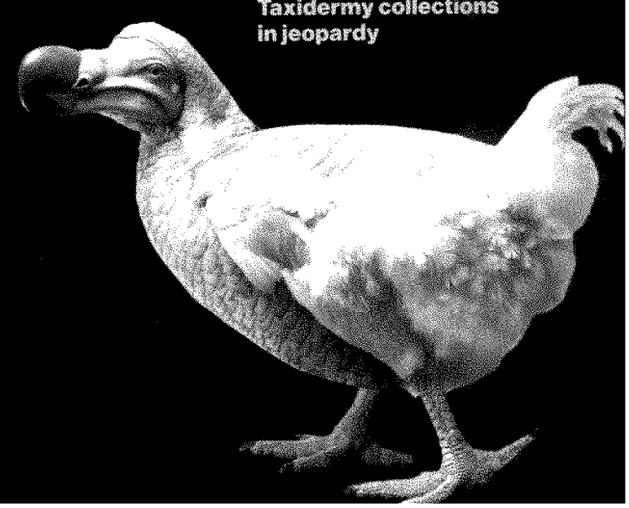
Museums Journal

Building bridges On the pros and ons of being a world heritage site

Increased exposure
Liverpool's waterfront photography gallery

Under threat
Taxidermy collections in jeopardy



my Ofer Wing
onal Maritime
eum, London

The St Chad Gospels is an eighth century manuscript, probably created to adorn the Saxon Cathedral, dedicated in 700. The Lichfield Angel, discovered under the nave of the cathedral in 2003, is a remarkable survival of early medieval sculpture dated to around 780 A.D. The Staffordshire Hoard is the largest collection of Anglo-Saxon gold and silver ever found and dates from the seventh century. See www.lichfield-cathedral.org / www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk

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Printed by Wyndeham Roche Limited
Subscription rates £105 UK; £160 overseas
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Museums Journal is published by the Museums Association (reg charity no 313024) and is editorially independent. Nothing should be taken to be the view of the MA unless stated. Museums Journal strives to avoid inaccuracies: if readers have a query or complaint they should contact the editor. Anyone who would like to contribute an article to Museums Journal is asked to first contact the editor.
ISSN 0-027-416-X

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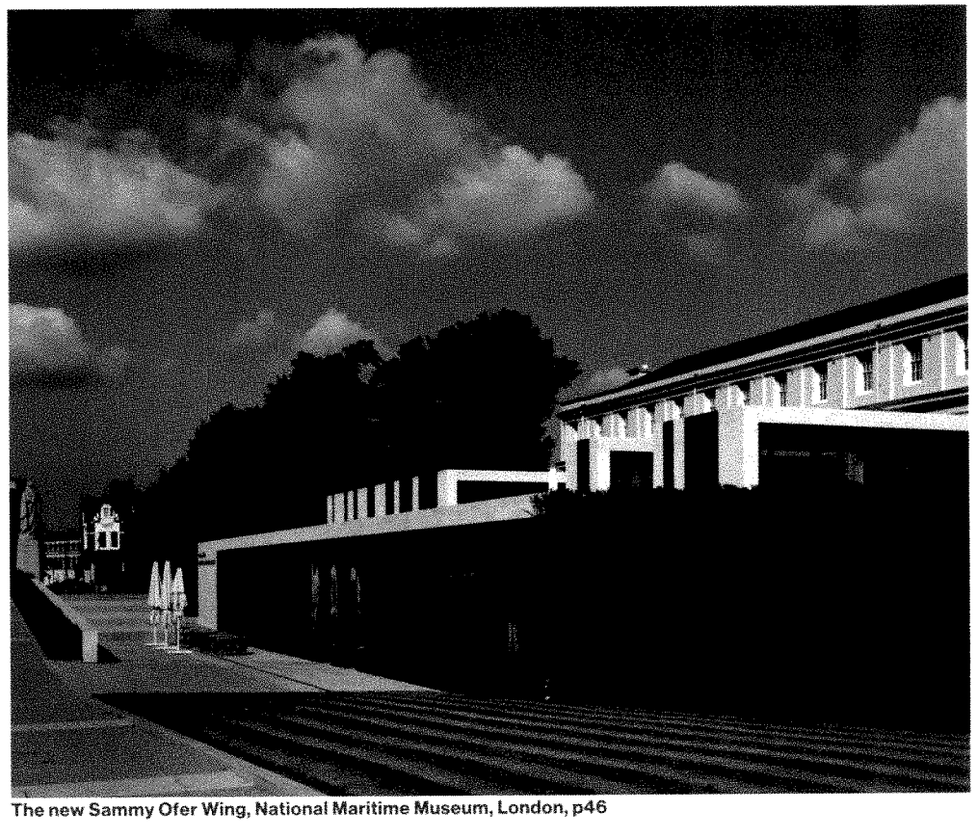

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MAIN COVER IMAGE: IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TRUST; MORLEY VON STERNBERG/OFER WINGS CHINATOWN, LIVERPOOL, MAY 1942 BY BERT HARDY, GIFT OF GETTY IMAGES (BAY IMAGE)

Editorial

Cuts are putting free admission at risk

Next month marks the 10th anniversary of the introduction of free admission for national museums in England (Scotland and Wales celebrated their anniversaries earlier this year).

It's a cause for applause when you consider that those organisations that formerly charged have increased their visitors by more than 150% on average in the intervening period.

There is no room for complacency, however; the Conservatives have long been rumoured to be in favour of charging and, despite all their protest to the contrary, would probably love the London nationals to be able to levy high admission charges on their millions of visitors.

Continued free entry is a cause worth supporting, but the 10-year celebrations might be muted when the UK-wide picture is taken into account.

In Scotland, for example, where national museums have been hard hit by funding reductions, there has been serious talk of reintroducing charges. Earlier this year, National Museums Scotland was forced to introduce charges for five- to 12-year-olds at three of its sites – a move it attributed directly to the budget cuts.

'The real effect of charging will be felt in terms of who visits a museum and the position the museum itself holds in the local community'

Elsewhere around the UK, local authority museums have suffered far more brutal cuts than the national institutions, and many have felt that they have had no choice but to introduce charges.

The impact where this has happened has been swift and drastic – falls in visitor numbers of between a third and a half have been recorded.

However, it's not just about the numbers that come through the door. The real effect of charging will be felt in terms of who visits a museum, and the position the museum itself holds in the local community.

So yes, let's celebrate free admission but let's also highlight the effect cuts are having on museums throughout the UK.

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
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www.twitter.com/sharonheal
www.museumsassociation.org/cuts

Labour appoints Harman as shadow culture secretary in cabinet reshuffle

Ivan Lewis is replaced after only a year in job

Rebecca Atkinson

Harriet Harman replaced Ivan Lewis as shadow culture secretary in last month's Labour Party reshuffle.

Dan Jarvis, MP for Barnsley Central, has been appointed shadow culture minister.

Harman continues as deputy leader and party chair, as well as taking the role as shadow secretary of state for culture, media and sport.

Six in 10 visitors to the MA website thought Harman would make a good shadow culture secretary

Lewis, who spent just 12 months covering culture, has moved to the Department for International Development.

The move came after Lewis faced media criticism for proposing a licensing scheme for the press. His office declined to comment on why he had been removed from the post.

A poll on the Museums Association website found that 60% of readers believed Harman would make a good shadow culture secretary.

Da Vinci exhibition faces threat of staff walkout

Attendants balloted for action in National Gallery security row

Gary Noakes

The National Gallery (NG) faces possible disruption to this month's Leonardo da Vinci exhibition following a threatened protest by staff.

Gallery attendants are considering action during the Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan exhibition after some were told that they would have to watch over two rooms rather than one.

Following the spending review, the gallery has a policy of not replacing staff when they leave. Attendants claimed the cutbacks allowed the vandalism of two Nicolas Poussin paintings in July because an employee was in an adjoining room.

The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) opened an indicative ballot last month to test sentiment. The timing meant it was too late to prompt full-scale industrial action at the start of the exhibition on 9 November, but it could threaten it over the Christmas period as the exhibition runs until 5 February.

Leonardo da Vinci's Lady with an Ermine

"It is not about strike action, it is about what sort of measures they feel they may be prepared to take," said a PCS spokesman.

Disruption is most likely to involve walkouts for part of the day. These will be particularly effective as timed admissions will be disrupted if galleries are cleared.

The latest dispute follows last year's pay negotiations, when staff at the gallery staged a series of three-hour walkouts.

A National Gallery spokeswoman said: "We have not received any notification that there will be a ballot for industrial action, but we will be prepared for it."

One-third of National Gallery rooms are invigilated by a single member of staff covering two areas.

In a statement, the National Gallery said: "The change in the number of gallery assistants is an incremental one and claims that the National Gallery is 'halving its surveillance' are untrue."

The spokeswoman added that any staff reductions were the result of natural turnover. "What we are doing is nothing new," she said. "Other galleries do exactly the same."

PRINCES CZARTORYSKI FOUNDATION

New £100m scheme will raise private cash for arts

Many museums may not be eligible for scheme to encourage philanthropy

Gareth Harris

A £100m scheme aimed at boosting private funding in the cultural sector has received a mixed response from museum professionals.

The Catalyst scheme, backed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Arts Council England (ACE), aims to help cultural organisations access funding from private sources.

The initiative is split into three strands. Catalyst Endowments offers match funding to help build endowments; the Catalyst Arts capacity building and match funding scheme will help organisations develop more sustainable fundraising models; and Catalyst Arts and Heritage fundraising capacity building grants is aimed at organisations with limited fundraising experience.

But the eligibility criteria mean that in most cases, only ACE regularly funded organisations can apply.

John Roles, head of Leeds Museums and Galleries, said: "We are looking to clarify criteria, as it seems only national portfolio or regularly funded organisations may be eligible, which will exclude most of the museum sector."

Leeds Museums and Galleries is seeking clarification on eligibility for the fund

DCMS, ACE and HLF are providing £55m for the endowments scheme. Grants of between £500,000 and £5m are available on condition that the amount is matched by funding from private donors.

This category is open to "major arts organisations", though ACE expects applicants will come from its pool of funded bodies.

Applicants must "already have an established and successful track record of fundraising", according to ACE guidelines.

ACE funding of £30m will be available for the Catalyst Arts: capacity building and match funding scheme. Only ACE-funded organisations can apply for awards of between £120,000 and £240,000.

Catalyst Arts and Heritage fundraising capacity building grants has a pot of £12m from ACE and HLF to distribute grants of £15,000 to £20,000.

"We would like to launch a corporate patronage scheme, but our capacity is limited," said Roles.

"Opera North in Leeds has considerable success in fundraising but they employ six full-time fundraising staff. We have no fundraising staff and achieve what we do as part of the day job."

Hartlebury Castle purchase to go ahead despite fire

Preservation trust would maintain museum

Gary Noakes

Plans by a preservation trust to purchase Hartlebury Castle are to go ahead despite a fire at the museum.

A blaze in a 20th-century outbuilding did not spread to the 18th-century reception building of the Grade I-listed castle that houses the Hurd Library and Worcestershire County Museum.

However, most of the material in the educational loans store was destroyed, including documents and other resources lent to schools.

The museum reopened quickly following the fire, which was thought to have been caused by an electrical fault, but its transport gallery and picnic area remained shut for several days due to problems with fire detectors.

Rachel Robinson, visitor experience manager at Museums Worcestershire, said up to 400 boxes of learning materials were lost, while a darkroom and computers were destroyed.

The castle is home to Worcestershire County Museum

"Fifty or 60 of the most popular boxes were out at the time, so we have a nucleus that we can use for now," she said.

Hartlebury Castle has been put on the market by its owner, the Church Commissioners. Robinson said the fire would not affect the proposed sale to the Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust, which would maintain the property as a museum.

The preservation trust has submitted a Heritage Lottery Fund stage one application for £4,682,700. A decision will be announced on 22 November.

In brief

Leeds brewery plan
Plans to convert the former Tetley's brewery in Leeds into a modern-art gallery have gone out to public consultation. There is local opposition to the scheme, which includes a 900-space commuter car park but only 1.2 acres of open space. If the scheme goes ahead, the 19th-century building would house two floors of galleries.

Bletchley in funds drive

Bletchley Park Trust is to begin a £1.7m campaign, Action This Day, to raise match funding following the award of a £4.6m Heritage Lottery Fund grant. The HLF award will enable the restoration of three code-breaking huts plus the construction of a visitor centre and exhibition space.

Iraq museum reopens
Iraq's National Museum in Baghdad is to fully reopen this month following the refurbishment of galleries and installation of security systems. The museum has refurbished 18 rooms after recovering about a third of the 15,000 relics that were looted during the Iraq war.

Award shortlist revealed
Five museums and artists have been shortlisted for the £60,000 Contemporary Art Society's Annual Award, which will be presented on 14 November. They are National Museum Wales (Cardiff) with Andrea Buttner; Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery with Christina Mackie; Shipley Art Gallery with Matthew Darbyshire; Walker Art Gallery (National Museums Liverpool) with Wael Shawky; and University of Warwick Art Collection with Katie Paterson. The winning museum will be able to commission a work from their artist.

Work experience: Women's Library exhibition explores history of women in the workplace

TUC LIBRARY COLLECTIONS/LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

An exhibition exploring the story of women and work has opened at the Women's Library in London. All Work and Low Pay looks at the huge range of jobs done by women over the past 150 years, and highlights campaigns for equal pay and fair working conditions. Exhibition curator Clare Rose said: "It's time to change the perception that, in the past, the majority of women in Britain were housewives. Women's work has always been essential to the economy, even though they had to work incredibly long hours to support themselves and their families." The exhibition runs until 4 April 2012.

Sea City to open in April

Southampton museum secures final funding

Gareth Harris

The Sea City Museum, the £15m centrepiece of a new arts complex in Southampton, is due to open in April 2012.

Last year, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £4.9m towards the project, but £10m was still needed (*Museums Journal September 2010, p4*).

Councillor John Hannides said Southampton City Council would provide £5m match funding for the museum scheme.

The remaining £5m will come from funds raised by the charitable organisation, Southampton Cultural Development Trust, which is seeking £8m over the next three years. In the meantime, the council will cover the extra cost.

The Sea City Museum will house two permanent displays and a gallery for special exhibitions.

'We can't repeal Human Rights Act'

David Fleming tells FIHRM conference that act should be implemented sensibly

Sharon Heal

The director of National Museums Liverpool said last month that talk of repealing the Human Rights Act was "embarrassing".

Speaking at the second Federation of Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) conference in Liverpool, David Fleming told delegates that he was dismayed by recent attacks on the act by members of the government.

"We have campaigners travelling from all corners of the globe to Liverpool, which shows the widespread commitment to tackle contemporary forms of racism, discrimination and human-rights abuses."

He argued that the act should be "implemented sensibly" rather than repealed.

Delegates at the FIHRM conference

More than 150 delegates from 20 countries discussed the role museums can play in promoting human rights and changing visitor perceptions.

But in a keynote address to the conference, Zahava Doering, editor of Curator: The Museum Journal, at the Smithsonian Institution, said there were no studies that showed museums could change visitors' behaviour or views.

"Exhibitions are inefficient methods for affecting change," she said.

Instead, Doering argued they might reinforce and extend existing behaviours.

"We know nothing about the long-term effects of programmes," she added.

"The problem is that we don't invest in long-term longitudinal studies."

But Fleming said that he believed museums could make an impact on human rights if they worked with partner organisations.

Future of two taxidermy collections is in jeopardy

Local groups worried about two stuffed-bird collections being held in storage by Sefton Council

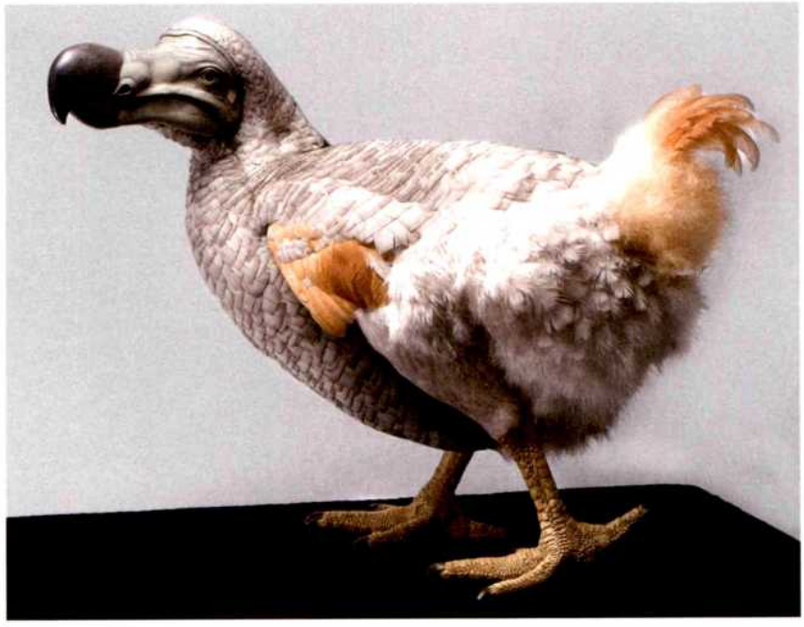
Rebecca Atkinson

The future of two "at risk" taxidermy collections held by Sefton Council remains undecided amid criticism from local groups about the proposed disposal.

The Echalaz Collection of stuffed birds has been kept in storage since 1999. The council said it was "unfit for display" and that it did not have the money nor the specialist staff to look after it.

The Pennington Collection of stuffed birds, which is also at risk of deterioration, was previously on display at the now closed Botanic Gardens Museum in Southport. Although most of the museum's collection will transfer to the Atkinson Art Gallery when it reopens in 2012, the council said there will not be enough room for the taxidermy collection.

Last year, it was proposed that Kendal Museum would take on some or all of the Echalaz Collection, but this has not been taken forward. Concerns were raised about the relationship between the museum and the British Historical Taxidermy Society (BHTS), although Kendal Museum said it has had "no dealings with the BHTS in respect of buying and selling taxidermy".



It was mooted last year that Kendal Museum should take on the Echalaz Collection

Local community groups and collectors have also raised objections to the disposal. According to reports in the local press, Sefton Council turned down an £18,000 offer to buy the Echalaz Collection.

In a statement, the council said: "Selling [the collections] to a dealer would mean that they could be lost to the public for ever, which would contradict the wishes of the people who donated them."

A sale could also conflict with the Museums Association's code of ethics, and could result in the museum service losing its accreditation status.

Community groups have argued that the collections should remain in the area.

Sefton Council is in talks with National Museums Liverpool (NML) about taking some of the collections that are deemed to be of national importance.

A council spokesman said: "The collections are with us and we are in discussions with NML on where they may go."

First Effective Collections project unveils initiatives

Old Tools, New Uses aids Scottish museums

Gareth Harris

The Old Tools, New Uses scheme, the first special project funded by the Museums Association's Effective Collections scheme, is moving ahead with various initiatives.

The project, which is the brainchild of the Scottish Transport and Industry Collections and Knowledge network (STICK), aims to help Scottish museums make better use of their tool and domestic-technology collections.

As part of the project, STICK organised a series of drop-in workshops where museum staff brought tools and domestic implements that were duplicates or whose provenance was unknown.

A treadle sewing machine has been sent to Tanzania

Unwanted items were then donated to Tools for Self Reliance, the organisation's charity partner, to be renovated and distributed to communities in Africa.

A blacksmith's leg vice has since been sent to the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, while a treadle sewing machine has been dispatched to the Mahembe Tailoring Group in Kigoma, Tanzania.

In brief

Tate in web initiative
Tate has unveiled what it claims is the first artistic programme created purely for the web. It has secured sponsorship from BMW to develop a series of online-only live performances that will start in March 2012 with a commission by French choreographer Jérôme Bell. Each of the five performances will take place at Tate Modern, without an audience present, and will be broadcast live online.

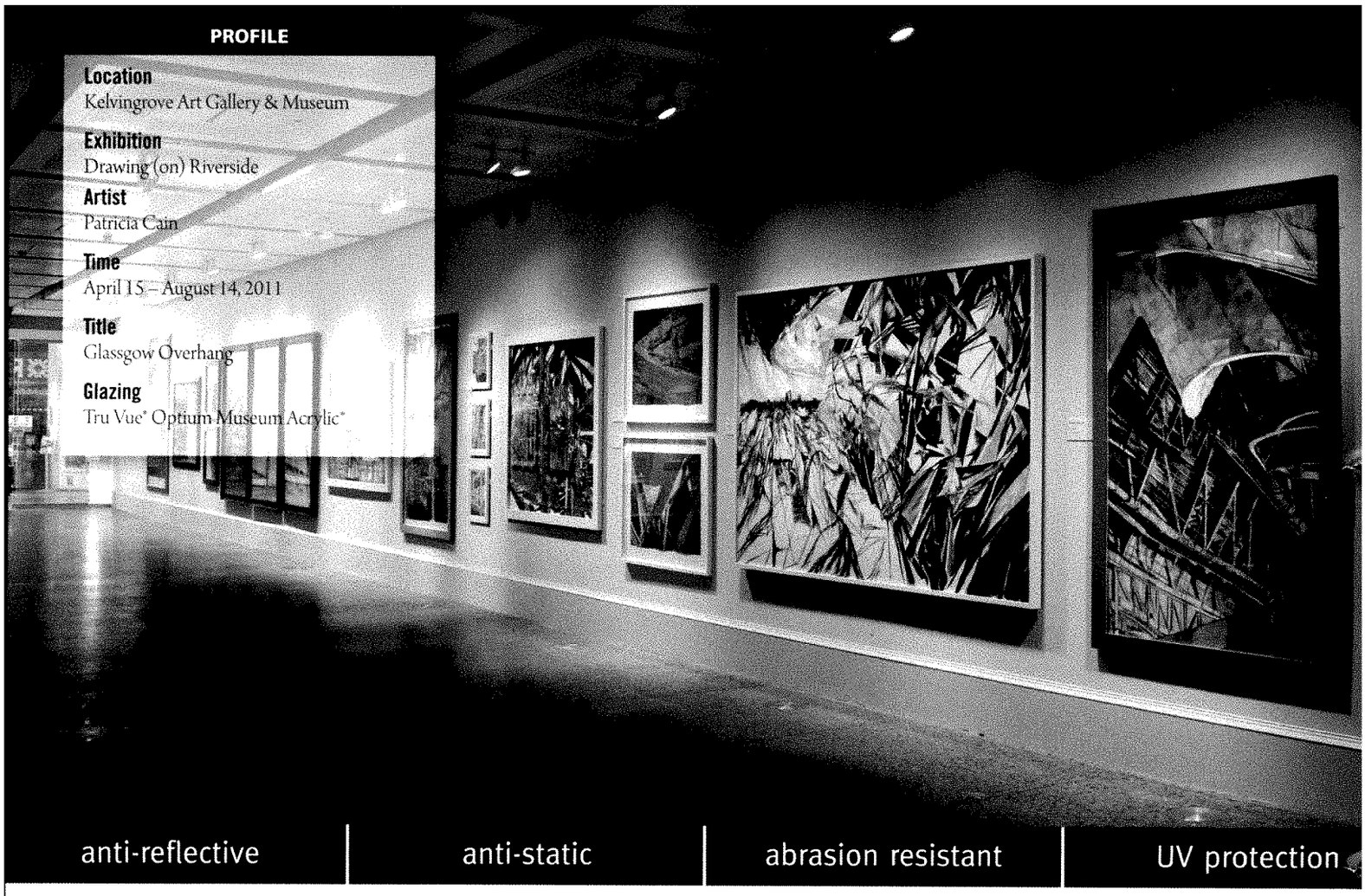
Design Museum plans

The Design Museum has submitted an outline planning application for changes to the Grade II*-listed Commonwealth Institute, where it is to move in 2014. Work will include the installation of lifts, disability access, basement and mezzanine levels, plus a restaurant. The conversion, by John Pawson, will be three times the size of the museum's current home, allowing it to display its entire collection.

Newport seeks ship home
Newport City Council has put a tender out inviting developers to find a new home for a medieval ship discovered on the banks of the River Usk nine years ago. Conservation of the vessel is expected to be finished in 2014, but Newport City Museum is not big enough to house it.

Amberley museum theft
Thieves have stolen thousands of pounds in cash from Amberley Open Air Museum in Arundel, West Sussex. The police have appealed for information after two men attacked a member of staff and forced him to open a safe in the museum's restaurant on the evening of 9 October. No weapons were used in the attack, and the 43-year-old employee was not harmed.

LUKE HAYES



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Small museums continue to suffer from budget cuts

Two museums close for good, while others opt to cut their opening hours

Gary Noakes

Cuts monitor

Smaller museums continue to face fallout from the Spending Review as budget cuts filter down to them from local authorities.

Birmingham's **Aston Manor Road Transport Museum** closed last month and begun a clearance of its collection after a £350,000 offer to buy the Victorian tram shed that houses it was rejected. Birmingham City Council rents the location to the museum for £43,000 a year and reportedly put a £900,000 price on the building.

The council said it had, in effect, subsidised the museum by £650,000 over the past 15 years, and trustees had not presented a viable business case. It added that a list of alternative venues had been provided.

Sheffield's **Traditional Heritage Museum**, which has been shut since February, is to close permanently after 26 years. The University of Sheffield, which owns the building, said it was too costly to maintain. It added that it was "considering options for the future of the collections", which include several original shop frontages and interiors.

Aston Manor Road Transport Museum is in the process of disposing of its collection

Wycombe Museum is to move its collection out of the listed Castle Hill House to save £385,000 in annual running costs. The museum will be managed by a charitable trust and moved to the offices of Wycombe District Council.

Selling the building, which has housed the collection since 1962, is expected to net £750,000. The council said the new facility would provide more space to display its furniture collection, which is mainly in storage.

Wellingborough Museum has averted a potential £16,000 cut in its £26,000 grant after talks with its local authority.

The museum trust's chairman, Robert Wharton, said a £19,950 award had been agreed with Wellingborough Borough Council.

"It's still a 25% cut," he said. "We will have to draw on reserves because you can't run a museum on that money. We are fortunate in that we have a shop and rooms that we let out that cover half our costs, but we can't have much more than a year of reduced funding."

The **Captain Cook Birthplace Museum** in Middlesbrough will close until March to cut running costs. A council spokesman said there was "no suggestion" it would not reopen.

Barrow-in-Furness's **Dock Museum** hopes to avert winter closure despite a £5m shortfall in the borough council's budget. It plans to reduce opening hours in the summer, rather than to close from November to March.

HLF simplifies acquisitions process for purchasers

Buyers will be able to meet tighter deadlines

Gary Noakes

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has changed its criteria for urgent acquisitions, simplifying the process to allow purchasers to meet tight deadlines such as auctions.

The HLF has removed the requirement for bidders to provide specific learning activity plans for items prior to their acquisition.

"We currently require them to supply an activity programme that shows how the item will be used," said an HLF spokeswoman. "The feedback we have had is that the time involved in putting that activity plan in place has held them back in terms of meeting the auction deadline."

The new system means museums will need to show only how a purchase would be used in their learning and participation programme.

"This will reduce the time and resources needed to prepare an application," the spokeswoman added.

The National Portrait Gallery was allocated £100,00 by the HLF to buy William Hoare's Ayuba Suleiman Diallo painting

The change follows a general consultation on how the HLF allocates funds.

Among the major awards under the existing system was a £225,900 grant towards the £316,000 acquisition by Ipswich Museum of the Wickham Market Hoard of 840 Iron Age coins, and £100,000 to the National Portrait Gallery for the earliest known British oil painting of a freed slave.

Funding news

Empty Nesta

Eight projects have received a share of the £500,000 **Digital Research and Development Fund for Arts and Culture**.

The initiative – funded by Arts Council England, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council – is for participants to develop projects that will benefit the wider arts and cultural sector.

Among the winners are the **Site Gallery** in Sheffield for its project to embed small teams of designers in arts organisations; the **New Art Exchange** in Nottingham, which has teamed up with online arts service Artfinder to create a sharing portal for artists and galleries; the **Exhibition Road Cultural Group**, which is working with the Dickens Museum on an app that will take users on a cultural journey across London; and the **Imperial War Museum**, which is working with two partners on a project to share cultural experiences with audiences.

There is no more money available under the fund, although the fact that nearly **500 projects** applied for a total of £28.5m shows high levels of interest. The scheme is a pilot and should lead to future funding opportunities.

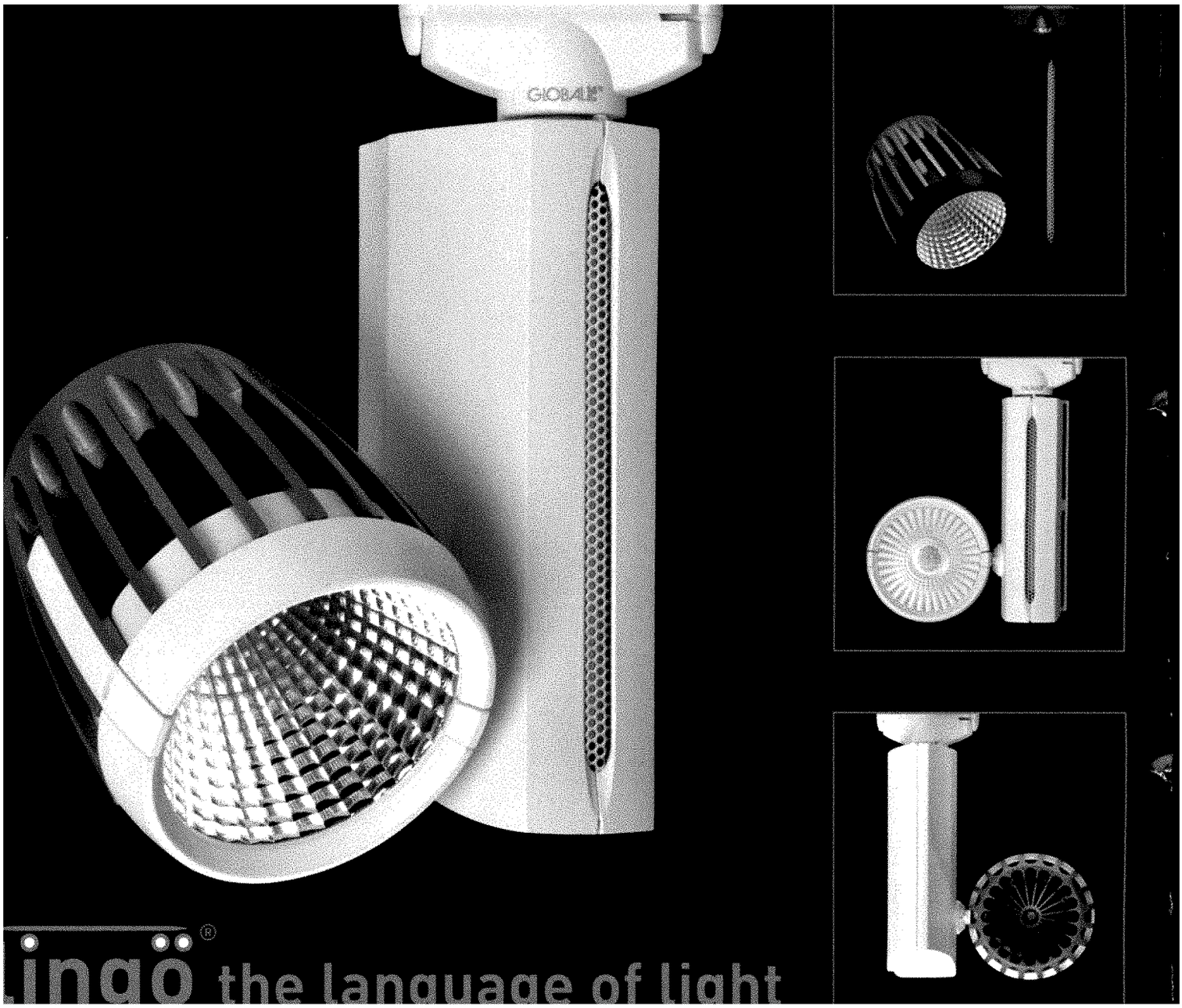
An ACE spokesman said: "It will inform our thinking about how we can best support digital projects."

Funding for digital projects is an area that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is looking to further support. In its recent consultation, nearly **two-thirds of respondents** backed proposals to allow for **digital-only projects**. More details will be available in the spring, when the HLF publishes its strategic framework for 2013 onwards.

www.nesta.org.uk
www.hlf.org.uk

Simon Stephens

QATAR MUSEUMS AUTHORITY/ORIENTALIST MUSEUM, DOHA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Prize fighters: Leeds Art Gallery shows work by four artists in running for Northern Art Prize

Works by four artists shortlisted for the Northern Art Prize go on display at Leeds Art Gallery this month. The exhibition, which runs from 25 November-19 February 2012, features James Hugonin (Untitled,(XVIII), Detail, pictured above) Liadin Cooke, Leo Fitzmaurice and Richard Rigg. The winner of the prize will be announced on 19 January. The judges are Caroline Douglas, head of the Arts Council Collection; Tim Marlow, director of exhibitions at White Cube; artist Simon Starling; Hepworth Wakefield director Simon Wallis; and Sarah Brown, curator of exhibitions at Leeds Art Gallery.

Big names join schools scheme

Jeremy Hunt signs up to Speakers for Schools

Rebecca Atkinson

Two national museum directors and the culture secretary have signed up to take part in Speakers for Schools, a new network of volunteers who give free talks to students at state schools.

Charles Saumarez Smith, chief executive of the Royal Academy of Arts and a former director of the National Portrait Gallery and National Gallery, and Sandy Nairne, director of the National Portrait Gallery, will take part in the UK-wide programme.

Jeremy Hunt, secretary of state for culture, media and sport, and Jenny Abramsky, chairwoman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund, have also volunteered.

Among the six topics that speakers will give talks on are culture, history and language; policy and society; and art, media and communications.

Scots intern scheme 160 times oversubscribed

MGS's new programme attracts 3,200 applicants for only 20 placements

Geraldine Kendall

Museums Galleries Scotland's (MGS) new interns programme, which launched last month, attracted more than 3,200 applications for just 20 places.

The programme aims to promote skills-sharing and sustainability through on-the-job training. Placements were offered at museums, galleries and local authorities across Scotland.

The 20 successful applicants will receive tax-free bursaries of £15,000 to support them through their year-long traineeships.

The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, National Mining Museum and Scottish Maritime Museum are among those running placements.

Among the museums offering placements is the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum

MGS chief executive Joanne Orr said: "We designed the programme to meet the needs of the sector and offer opportunities for graduates to learn useful skills on the ground from other professionals, in a working environment.

"The sheer number of applications received illustrates the appetite there is for a project of this type."

The scheme aimed to attract graduates from diverse backgrounds and did not require applicants to have previous training in museum-specific skills.

It was funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future programme, which closed this year.

Maurice Davies, the Museums Association's head of policy, said the numbers applying for the MGS scheme showed how competitive it had become for graduates to enter the sector.

"From one point of view, it's great that so many people want to work in museums," he said. "But it's not easy for the individuals struggling to get a career in the sector.

"The MGS scheme is an excellent way of helping people train for museum work. Sadly, most museums can't afford to pay interns."

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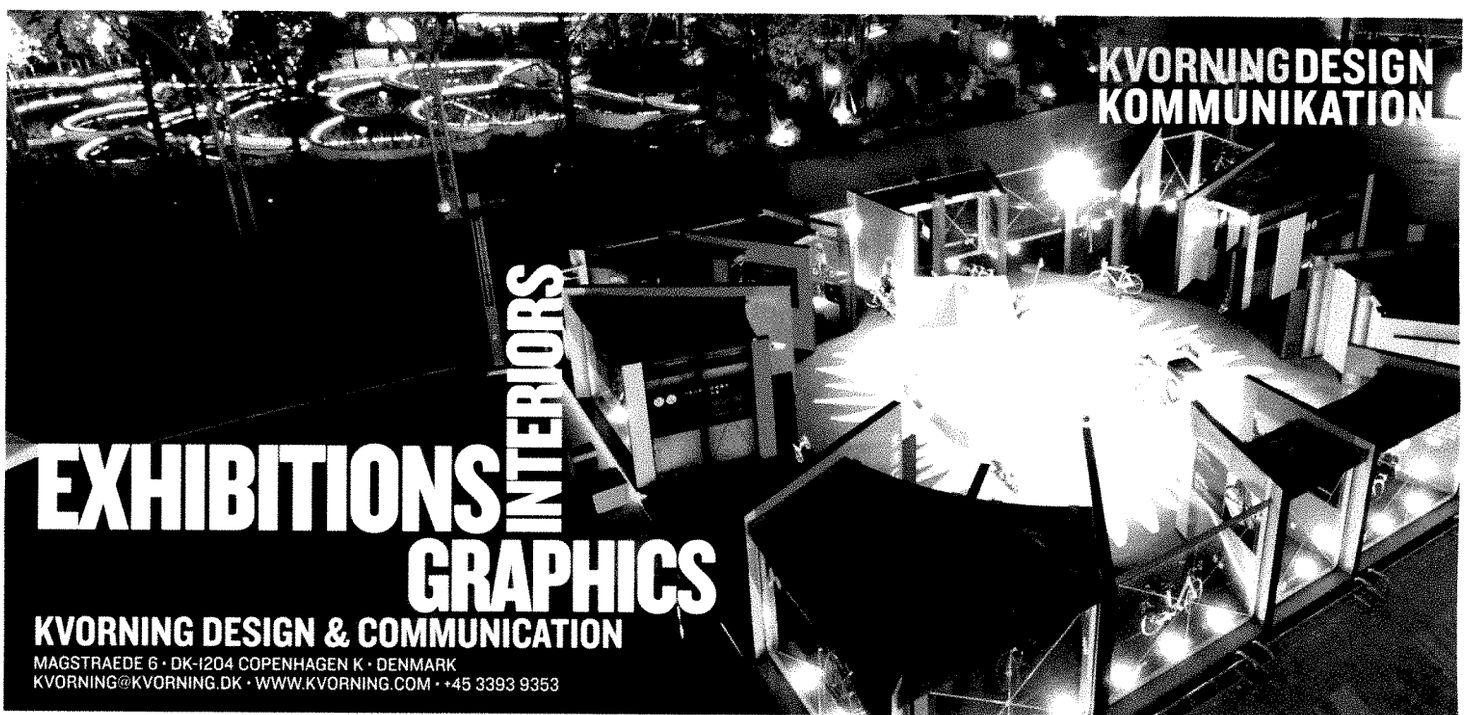

ACE apologises to MDOs for being mucked around

Hedley Swain affirms ACE's commitment to MDOs and unveils plans for new provision model

Rebecca Atkinson

Hedley Swain, director of museums and Renaissance at Arts Council England (ACE), apologised to museum development officers (MDOs) at the Museums Association conference last month and admitted they had been "mucked around".

"We're absolutely committed to museum development," he said.

"We recognise the value and we've talked about how to look forward in terms of how we deliver it.

"We are putting aside £3m a year and, early in the new year, when we've finalised major grants, we will invite bids from organisations to deliver museum development as they see best in different parts of the country."

Delegates at the Museums Association conference heard Hedley Swain's apology

There is widespread concern that many MDOs could be issued with redundancy notices before the end of the year because current funding for posts runs out in March 2012.

Swain said: "We're aware that we are leaving it late and that current MDO [funding] runs out in March. But in the next couple of weeks, we will talk to funders in the hope that current arrangements can be continued until the new model is in place.

"Apologies – MDOs have been mucked around by the uncertainty."

Althea Efunshile, ACE's chief operating officer, told conference delegates that the organisation strived to be passionate, transparent and to have "grown-up relationships".

She added: "We have a strong desire to listen, to be porous and to be clear about what we can achieve and where we can have the most impact across our three roles of funding, developing and championing."

JP Morgan gifts £0.6m

Three institutions to host branded events

Gary Noakes

The National Portrait Gallery, National Theatre and Southbank Centre are to receive £600,000 from investment bank JP Morgan to fund ongoing work and a series of branded events.

The one-year programme will fund performances and exhibitions under the JP Morgan Signature Series, as well as events for clients and guests.

A spokesman for JP Morgan said the sponsorship was "more of a business-to-business donation".

"Most of this is access for clients," he said. "The likelihood is we will be doing exclusive events."

JP Morgan's past involvement has included the commissioning of eight new portraits for the gallery and the staging of two plays at the National Theatre.

The bank will contribute more than £1m to the arts this year.

World news digest

France: The Musée d'Orsay in Paris has completed a two-year renovation that includes refurbished Impressionist galleries on the fifth floor of the museum. A new four-floor decorative arts wing, Pavillon Amont, and temporary exhibition space on the fifth floor, were also part of the €20m revamp.

France: The appointment of Catherine Pégard, a former advisor to president Nicolas Sarkozy, as director of the Palace of Versailles has been criticised by French culture professionals. Critic Didier Rykner said the appointment was a "smack in the face by Sarkozy to museum curators". Pégard, an ex-journalist, replaces Jean-Jacques Aillagon.

India: An $80m museum is scheduled to open in 2015 on a 13-acre site in Patna, in eastern India. The principal funder, the state of Bihar, has hired culture consultancy Lord Cultural Resources to develop the masterplan for the museum, which will focus on the ancient city of Pataliputra, the predecessor of Patna.

Qatar: The emirate will host Japanese artist Takashi Murakami's first solo show in the Middle East next year. The exhibition, entitled Murakami-Ego, will be held in the Al-Riwaq exhibition hall (9 February-24 June), which is in the grounds of the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. Curated by Massimiliano Gioni, the show will feature more than 60 works dating from 1997 to today.

Spain: A €44m arts centre in the northern city of Avilés faces closure only six months after opening. The Oscar Niemeyer International Cultural Centre, which was designed by 103-year-old Brazilian architect Niemeyer, could be shut down by the regional government of Asturias because of alleged "serious irregularities" in its accounts.

Turkey: The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston has returned a second-century marble bust of mythological hero Hercules to Turkey. The bust, entitled Weary Herakles, is set to be reunited with its bottom half, which is in the Antalya museum in southern Turkey. The piece was first shown in Boston in 1982.

The Musée d'Orsay has completed a two-year renovation

US: The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Hollywood has teamed up with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Lacma) to launch a museum about the film industry. The planned institution is scheduled to open on the Lacma campus within five years.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, the Guardian, San Francisco Chronicle, CBC News and artinfo.com

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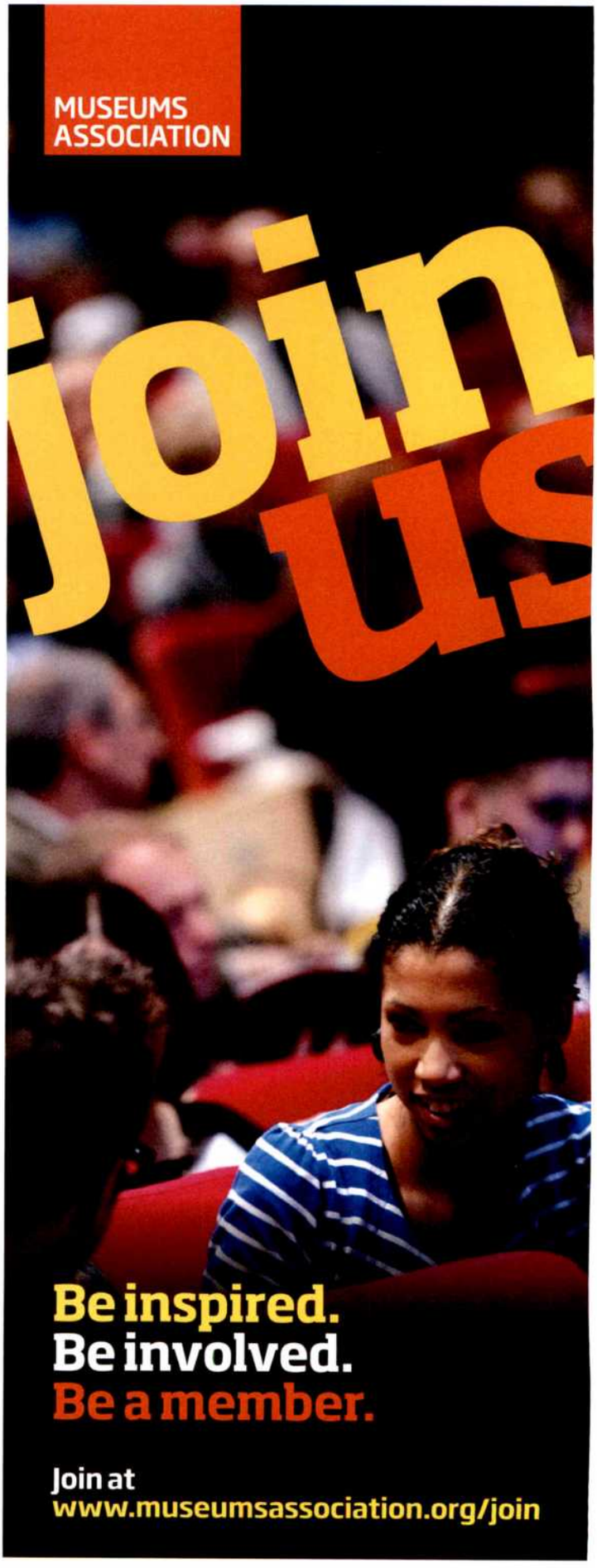


Scotland thinks strategically

After two years in preparation, the National Strategy Consultation document has been unveiled

Geraldine Kendall

It won't be long until Scotland joins Wales and Northern Ireland in producing a national museum strategy. Due to launch in spring 2012, Scotland's draft strategy is currently up for consultation with the museum community and other interested bodies.

The National Strategy Consultation document is the product of more than two years' discussion and preparation. In mid-2009, against a climate of economic upheaval across the UK, the then culture minister Michael Russell invited museums across Scotland to form a thinktank tasked with mapping out the future direction of the sector.

The Museums Think Tank decided that Scotland's publicly funded museums, in the face of declining resources, needed a strategic framework to bolster the sector's resilience. One cabinet reshuffle later, in December 2010, the new culture minister Fiona Hyslop asked Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) to take the lead in formulating a national strategy.

The pros and cons of having a strategy have been much debated, and pitfalls still remain for Scotland. There is a danger that, with input from numerous national bodies and interested parties, a strategy may become overly compromised or too focused on short-term political targets.

England arguably fell into this trap with its draft strategy, developed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2009. Many felt that, though laudable, its aims were too broad to translate into action. The document disappeared amid government and organisational changeover.

The Riverside Museum opened in Glasgow this summer

A national strategy also inevitably brings museum policy closer to government, and may not be immune from political interference. This happened in Northern Ireland, when former culture secretary Nelson McCausland tried to insert a cultural-rights clause into the nation's Museums Policy that, among other things, pushed Ulster Museum to represent creationism alongside the theory of evolution.

However, the Scottish sector has largely welcomed the idea of a strategy, saying it would bring a greater clarity of purpose, giving national and non-national museums better opportunities to work together, more tools to show their social and economic impact, greater leverage with funders and added weight in the agendas of related sectors, such as tourism.

The draft document was produced by a steering committee, the Museum Strategy Group, made up of representatives from organisations such as National Museums Scotland and Glasgow Life. The document's underlying theme is partnership and it says it aims to meet the needs of all sizes and types of museum.

The strategy's guiding principle is improving public impact and benefit. Themes and objectives touch on predictable concerns: boosting entrepreneurial spirit; investing in knowledge and learning; connecting people and places; and improving services and collections.

But neither the document nor the Museum Strategy Group has escaped criticism. Tamsin Russell, president of the Scottish Museums Federation, says the draft is positive as a whole, but describes some of its objectives as "old wine in new bottles", saying it isn't as innovative or edgy as it should be and fails to make "that next-generation leap".

She adds that if the steering committee had featured more talented junior staff, it would have been more likely to have challenged orthodox thinking.

By far the biggest concern lies in how the strategy will be implemented. At the same time as running the consultation, MGS is being transformed into the national development body charged with rolling out the strategy and evaluating its progress. It will no longer be a membership organisation, but full details of its new role are yet to be ironed out.

Jane Carmichael, director of collections at NMS, told the Museums Association conference last month that this has led to discussions about the strategy being "mixed in" with debate on how MGS will operate in future, making it harder to get a clear picture. The consultation, she added, is admirable in its scope but unclear about the mechanisms for putting ideas into practice.

Russell agrees, saying it is "equally as important" to be consulted on the implementation process; at present, only a few short paragraphs in the draft document are devoted to planning and delivery. She also points out that smaller museums will need support, coaching and investment to meet the aims of the strategy, but says there is little evidence of how this would be achieved.

Alongside the Scottish consultation, the MA asked its members for feedback on how it should respond to the draft policy. Responses echoed the Scottish sector's concerns, and director Mark Taylor has called on MGS to be explicit about its role and how it plans to implement the strategy.

The launch date has been pencilled in for March, and MGS needs be on the statute books as a development body by the spring. The sector will be anxiously watching to see if this short turnaround allows enough time for its concerns to be taken into consideration.

- The MGS consultation closes on 8 November. See: *http://mus.ms/px4INA*
- See comment, p17

Strategy timetable*

8 November 2011: online consultation closes
March 2012: launch of national strategy
April 2012: national roadshow
Spring-autumn 2012: MGS undergoes transition into national development body

*some dates are provisional

Collections need to be put back centre-stage

Oliver Green

The long established and peculiarly English notion that science and technology are off the scale of the cultural spectrum feels as strong as ever. And now museums are under the auspices of Arts Council England (ACE), which in turn is answerable to Ed Vaizey as minister for culture in England. Another minister, David Willetts, is responsible for universities and science.

Of course museums are not just about the arts, and universities don't only teach and do research in science. These are only names, but they can suggest priorities. We ignore them at our peril.

I am quite comfortable with museums being in with ACE. It may not yet fully grasp what museums are about but it is listening and learning and is realistic about the difficult financial situation everyone faces.

The most encouraging feature of ACE's new guidelines for major grants is that collections are back at the centre, just as they should be. Collections were once the defining feature of a museum, but have come to seem like a boring irrelevance to some.

The stuff, which is what visitors come to see, has been marginalised. Collections are what every museum should be caring for, displaying with style, explaining creatively, making accessible and generally shouting about on everyone's behalf, but it has taken ACE to remind us of this.

Science museums are the worst offenders, often seeing their mission as being more to do with the public understanding of science than responsibility for cultural heritage. If science is seen as difficult to explain and something mainly for kids, that looks to the future not the past, the stage is set for wiping the historic artefacts off the map. They are often considered too dull to display and are easily characterised as irrelevant to the modern world. So museums morph into hands-on science centres with few if any objects to worry about and a relentless dumbing down to focus on gizmos and gadgets.

None of the big new museum projects this year were science and technology based. There may well be a strong arts bias in English culture, but there is no point moaning about it. Let's face it, arts and history museums are usually far better at communication and creative display, so the best hope for science and technology is to learn from their success.

The most innovative and intelligent science exhibition this year was the Wellcome's brilliant Dirt show, which mixed performance art and medical history and incorporated museum collections. It was a secret signpost to a more creative science museum future that still recognised our fascination with curious objects of the past.

My favourite exhibition of all time was the Thirties show organised by ACE at the Hayward Gallery in 1979 on British art and design. ACE's main partner was the Victoria and Albert Museum but hundreds of objects were loaned by science and technology museums and from industry.

It made a big impression on me but sadly I've never seen anything like it since. ACE does not do exhibitions of this kind anymore but now it is facilitating the whole of the cultural sector and hopefully bringing science and technology in from the cold.

It only needs a little imagination to give this some momentum. The Turbine Hall at Tate Modern once generated electricity but now we seem content to use the shells of our industrial past for modern art installations. Why don't we do more to bring art and science together again in museums? Blockbuster exhibition on the Power of Electricity anyone?

Oliver Green is a museum consultant and writer

The diary of a national museum director *Part 17*

I went to the Museums Association (MA) annual conference in Brighton last month. The delegates are terribly common. Someone said the director of the MA dresses for dinner, but it isn't true. I had to eat alone.

Few delegates knew about the new DCMS/London Zoo exchange programme. Ed Vaizey is on placement in a cage at the zoo, and the new minister is a monkey called Socrates.

Accompanied by his special adviser, an orang-utan, the new minister walked with surprising dignity to the podium. He presented his vision silently, through images.

First, the word ETHICS appeared on the screen. The minister showed photos of Britain today: a glittering champagne reception at the Tate (I was in the crowd!); the so-called poverty of children in nearby estates; animals in factory farms; and the impact of war and climate change on ecosystems.

Then, under the words THE MUSEUMS WE NEED, he outlined his strategy. The arts council will be replaced by a new Culture Commission, capable of supporting science and history museums. There will be a radical redistribution of public funding from London nationals to small museums in the regions, and major investment in social enterprise and environmental programmes.

I was outraged that a mere monkey would dare to present such insulting ideas. What about excellence? Several national museum directors walked out. Socrates eyed them with scorn.

Just as he finished, a cry rang out. Ed had escaped from the zoo! Naked, he stood before the audience. "The monkey is wiser than me," he said. "The job's yours." He bowed to Socrates, and left the building.

PAUL BOMMER

Strategy for Scottish museums is vital

Joanne Orr

Since the end of 2010, following a ministerial announcement, Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) has been involved in the process of developing a national strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries and is working towards becoming the national development body for the sector.

The Museum Strategy Group, with wide representation from the sector and chaired by Fiona Ballantyne, also chairwoman of the MGS Board, has been working since February to develop the proposed vision, themes and strategic objectives, in conjunction with consultant BOP.

The role and impact of museums in society for public benefit was felt to be a guiding principle in the development of the strategy and encouraging museums to become more entrepreneurial and develop increasingly effective partnerships were identified as overarching objectives. Above all, it was recognised that in addition to meeting the needs of the entire sector, the strategy had to be owned by the sector if it was to be effective. It was therefore acknowledged from the outset that consulting and engaging museums and galleries was crucial.

Although not without its challenges, the process so far has been extremely positive. Almost one year on, against the background of an economic downturn, it is good to see museums engaged in a major consultation to consider and develop the detail of this new "framework of understanding". Launched at MGS's Collaborating to Compete conference in September, the consultation on the national strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries is now well underway. This participative process will enable museums to work together towards making strategic, long-term decisions to support the development of their future resilience and sustainability.

A new approach to collaborative working will be a vital outcome of the process. Museums and galleries will need to identify the elements they can deliver on and incorporate these into their planning, using the strategy as context and framework. Similarly, the new national development body's corporate plan will have its roots in the final strategy, and will enable and support the sector to deliver against agreed objectives.

The process of building the national strategy in a participative and inclusive manner has served as an example of how the sector can work together in partnership. The challenge now, in this final phase of consultation, is to encourage the widest possible dialogue and input to ensure a robust, comprehensive strategy that will not only be relevant for the whole sector in Scotland but will also drive, underpin and deliver its future aspirations.

Joanne Orr is the CEO of Museums Galleries Scotland.
The consultation is open until 8 November http://bit.ly/StrategyConsultation

The insider

Help wanted: brace yourselves for the rush

Maev Kennedy

Good lord, there are thousands of them out there: we haven't had crowds like this since the head of catering had one of his funny turns and re-enacted the Naked Chef in the Victorian kitchen gallery.

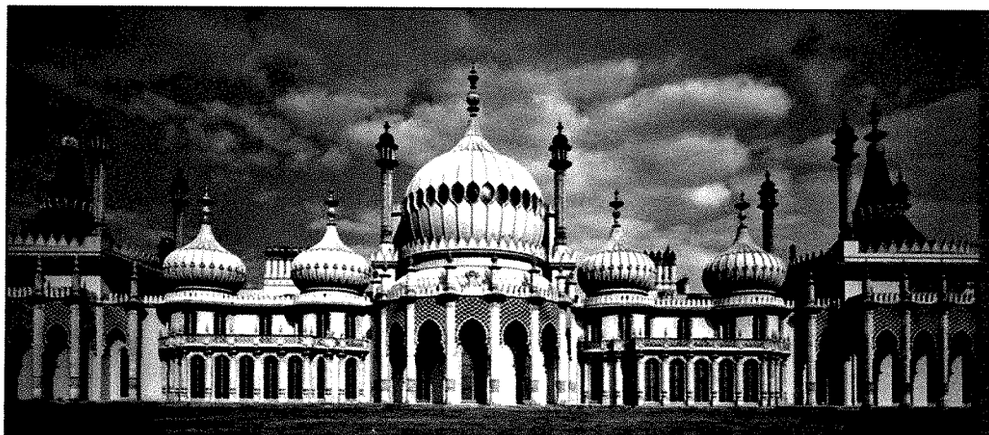
Actually I think we'd better put up the "closed for cleaning" sign on the cafe again: I've just done a recce and we seem to be down to five raisin Danish and two fish fingers, so I think it could turn nasty if they all surge in.

Right, while we're waiting for the leaflets, could somebody please go down and try and sell them Friends membership? They're not going as well as I expected, I don't think people have quite grasped what good value family membership represents, with two invitations to join pot shard washing sessions, the nettle beer and groats Anglo Saxon evening every Michaelmass, and free admission to every single charging exhibition between 10.30am and 10.45am every other Wednesday.

I know, I know, I have looked out the front window, I do know the queue now goes right down the back garden and past the Tudor privy – I wonder could we distract them all for half an hour by inviting them to join in cess pit clearing? Or the stone breaker's yard is free at the moment ... and could we get hold of some oakum quickly? No! Is that really the bank manager? There, beside the school accountant?

Thank heavens, the leaflets at last. I think the best thing is to send the work experience genius to distribute them along the queue: could you ask him to wear that disgraceful jumper with the moth holes and the incompetently darned elbows from the Mrs Beeton Live session – if he looks too flash I'm not sure he'll make it back in one piece.

Right: "The museum wishes to apologise sincerely for any misinformation inadvertently conveyed, and to stress that while applications are still warmly invited for the internships recently advertised, these positions are UNPAID." Yes that should do it – but maybe give him the Take Shelter tin hat too.



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On rabbit holes and forced marriages

Åshild Andrea Brekke

Remember it's ok to fail, was the first thing I was told when I started working for the Norwegian Museum, Library and Archive (MLA) Authority in 2007. I remember thinking how cool it was to work in a place where failure was seen as a necessary part of development work – pushing innovation and breaking new ground is not for the faint-hearted.

The Norwegian MLA was established in January 2003 as part of a long-term government strategy for developing these three sectors and implementing cultural policies. The MLA in England had been a significant source of inspiration. It was designed as a cross-sectoral public body responsible for developing strategies, policies and projects aimed at strengthening innovation and quality in museums, libraries and archives in an age of digitisation and increasingly diversified audiences. Definitely a cool mandate, in other words.

But by January this year the party was over and before we knew it we had merged with the Arts Council Norway. The culmination of a swift, but obscure political process, which had started in 2009 when, out of the blue, a white paper on libraries proposed that our library functions and staff be transferred to the National Library. From the inside it felt like we had become part of a surreal game of dominoes – move the library piece and the rest falls down the rabbithole.

So where did we fail? In fact, did we? A 2008 government commissioned evaluation stated that although we could have communicated our priorities more clearly, we had proved an important player in the development of museums, libraries and archives. Innovative projects on digital storytelling; sensitive and contested topics; participatory and inclusive methods; as well as on partnerships with correctional services and Alzheimer-patients were just some of the initiatives we helped to develop and supported with our seed-funding. All in all, a success story.

But it ended with a forced marriage between two very different parties: the MLA, a young and somewhat unorthodox organisation with a bit of pocket money, and the arts council, an older organisation, with a different mission and a significantly bigger range of earmarked funds.

Ten months into the first year of marriage things seem to be moving in the right direction. Not least thanks to our new director. She has embraced the merger with energy, open-mindedness and humour. This is promising in view of the formidable tasks ahead, both in the arts and the cultural heritage sectors. Who knows what ground-breaking cross-sectoral projects may result from this particular marriage? This rabbithole looks like it's leading to a more interesting place.

Åshild Andrea Brekke is a senior adviser at Arts Council Norway

From where I'm standing

Discussing the politics of representation

Felicity Heywood

Last month the Institute of International Visual Arts (Iniva) hosted the second in its series Significant Voices, giving the floor to the artist Yinka Shonibare.

The packed audience got a real sense of what makes Shonibare tick. With humour and honesty the artist talked about his early years, his Yoruba heritage and post-colonialism.

Shonibare's trademark – African Batik, often on fictional figures from British aristocracy, has an interesting story behind it. In the 1980s, says Shonibare, Margaret Thatcher talked of returning to Victorian values. "Victorian" used to scare him, as it conjured notions of the Heart of Darkness.

But he made a choice. Instead of running from it he embraced it and pushed it further. "It was okay for Picasso to mess around with African heritage. My exotic is Victoriana," he says, "It is my fetishisation of European culture."

Born in London, he left for Lagos as a toddler, to return as a 17-year-old. With middle-class parents, Shonibare says he always felt the right to occupy the centre and couldn't fully grasp "why one group would be unfair to another group, especially racially". So he read texts and explored the historical situation that led to the inequalities. He says he visited places such as the Museum of Mankind to help him to understand cultural stereotypes.

He never had any feeling of being the "other" until his art professor questioned why he wasn't producing "authentic African art", when he preferred to interpret Perestroika.

Shonibare makes it quite clear that his art is not about the representation of politics but the politics of representation. "I'm not interested in the polemic – it's about engaging in an entertaining and seductive way." And he adds: "I could say something very political but not so political that my audience would want to kill me."

He emphasises that art for him is largely about embracing his need for expression – he makes art for himself and if others can enjoy it, well, good.

Creating a contemporary museum habitat

The recent closure of my local Habitat in Harrogate was a big come down for me, as a once stylish environment was reduced to a bargain basement full of half empty shelves and scrappy handwritten signs.

As a museum curator with a passion for the development of domestic interiors and design it was bound to affect me. It was the passing of an era. Back in 1984 I wrote a piece on modern interiors for Museums Journal. Trying to find a snappy title I was chatting with my friend and fellow curator Julia Holberry who came up with Heals to Habitat. It was perfect and summed up the way in which good contemporary design had become available on the British high street. It was when Habitat's founder, Terence Conran still controlled the company.

So much has changed since then; Ikea arrived with a cut-price flatpack Scandinavian modernism that has almost delivered the Bauhaus dream of well designed mass-produced affordability. The internet allows us to buy a huge range of original and replica "design classics" at good prices. We British have become converted to the contemporary.

It was so different in the late 60s and early 70s. I remember as a kid growing up in Nottingham that domestic style was still dominated by the three-piece and ghastly "Cromwellian" reproductions.

When Habitat opened in Nottingham in November 1972 it was like entering a different world. You were lured in by windows displaying furniture with clean lines and bright industrial lighting. Habitat had a personality, based on the tastes of Conran and his team. It was that eclectic mix of modernism and tradition. It offered new choices to people, and educated them about design. You knew that Conran was passionate about design and design education. He proved it through the glorious experiment that was the Boilerhouse at the V&A and the establishment of the Design Museum.

Modern museums understand the need to record modern life through a variety of media, including oral history, photography and the collection of objects. The latter is a challenging exercise given the sheer volume of material available. There is a real need to exercise judgement and restraint as storing all this domestic detritus is expensive. There is also the need to present a realistic version of the past.

The reconstructed interior has a long tradition in museums dating back to early 20th century. The most common expression of this is the Victorian Parlour, all too often an ill-researched collection of clutter. The interpretation of country houses like Upton has moved things into the 1930s and museums such as York Castle, St Fagans and the Geffrye have delivered displays of domestic interiors from the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s.

We need to make sure that museum collections record the influence of Habitat. Many have collected the catalogues, but what of the furniture that helped shape the taste of postwar generations? Seeing the real thing remains a powerful stimulus, especially if accompanied by contextual information about the owners; where and how it was used, how much it cost etc.

Here's a test; do we collectively have enough to furnish a good retrospective show at either the V&A or the Design Museum? We can do it for Pugin, William Morris, and Christopher Dresser but can we do it for Conran, who is arguably as important as that impressive trio?
Mark Suggitt, director, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

The appeal of science

The Science Museum's appeal lies in its ability to cater to the needs of a wider audience beyond families. It provides an intelligent balance between hands-on science and cultural heritage. (*Museums Association website, 3 October 2011*).

Nearly 3 million visitors of all ages come to the museum each year to learn about the history of science and technology – illustrated through our world-class display collection of more than 17,000 objects, which form an enduring record of scientific, technological and medical invention, discovery and achievement.

While we do seek to engage younger audiences through interactive displays, shows and workshops, at the same time we offer a varied cultural programme aimed at adults including arts exhibitions and space collections, as well as our monthly Lates evening, which attracts on average about 3,000 young adults each month.
Hadrian Ellory-van Dekker, head of collections, Science Museum, London

Trench telegraph lines in the first world war

Wrong direction

Regarding your article about the Once Upon A Wartime exhibition at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) (*Museums Journal September, p31*) – when designers produce a design, can they please get the details correct. The corrugated iron used in the Anderson shelters ran in a vertical direction (they were horizontal in the exhibition) for strength. This also gives the structure its unique visual signature so, come on IWM, get it right!
Steve Davis, consultant designer, Setout

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Jobs needed

The news, reported recently on the Museums Association (MA) website, that more than 3,200 graduates have applied for 20 paid internships as part of a programme being run by Museums Galleries Scotland has reactivated the debate over entry to the museums profession and also the use of internships. Applicants will receive tax-free bursaries of £15,000 to support them through their year-long traineeships at Scottish museums (see news. p11). Here are some comments from the MA website:

I have been running a curatorial internship for English Heritage for the last three years. It is offered through a local university and paid at a rate slightly above the national minimum wage. The intern is trained in all aspects of collections management and care and in the principles of interpretation, etc. I don't think it is fair to ask people to undertake this kind of work without pay.
Pam, curator, Fort Brockhurst

As a history and museum studies graduate, I would have relished the opportunity to learn skills only transferable on the premises through a closely-monitored programme. It would be encouraging if we could make more of those who have done a postgraduate in museum studies and are finding it hard to get into the sector, rather than offer it primarily for recent graduates with little or no experience. It raises the question as to whether a postgraduate in museums/heritage is actually needed?
Anonymous MA member

This internship programme favoured applicants with no or little museum experience.... What about recent museum studies graduates?
Anonymous MA member

Clarification
Patton would like to point out that it was the construction manager for the fit-out of the National Museum of Liverpool (*Museums Journal September 2011, p42*)

In the December issue of Museums Journal

- Interpreting art, by Sara Selwood
- Baroness Andrews, the chairwoman of English Heritage, talks to Simon Stephens about how the organisation is facing up to new challenges
- Reviews: Roman Frontier Gallery, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle; Fusilier Museum, London; Firstsite, Colchester; Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman, British Museum, London
- Plus news, comment, letters, jobs and much more

www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal

Museum Practice online

- What makes a good museum label? The current issue of Museum Practice looks at experiments with digital technology. Plus, the interpretation team at Glasgow's new Riverside Museum talk about scriptwriting.

www.museumpractice.org

Vox pop

Do all museums have to be family friendly?

Dea Birkett
director, Kids in Museums

"Who's in your family? Your parents? Your kids? Cousins? The dog, perhaps?

When someone says not every museum should be family friendly, I always wonder which kind of family they don't want to welcome. It's only if we define family very narrowly – two parents and two kids – that such a statement makes any sense.

Too many museum activities and tickets make presumptions about who's in a family. A single grandparent, aged 45, with two grandchildren may not count as family. An 18-year-old who's primary carer of their 13-year-old cousin won't get a family ticket. Grandparents' activities are aimed at older people, and parenting activities are rarely for teenagers. If we get real about modern families, then it makes sense to welcome all of them. Except, perhaps, the dog."

Ken Arnold
head of public programmes, Wellcome Collection

"No. After much market research in preparation for setting up Wellcome Collection, we decided to aim primarily for audiences of 14 and above.

We are, of course, delighted when grown-ups bring younger people with them, and somewhat less keen on the opposite dynamic. Our exhibitions and events are very much made with adults in mind, and then sometimes we seek to add layers and mechanisms for drawing in younger audiences.

Aiming specifically at children is, I think, very unlikely to engage anyone else but the target audience; whereas many children and teenagers are keenly attracted to adult culture. And if educational purposes are paramount, then I suspect media other than museums and galleries might well be more effective."

Caroline Ellis
head of special collections, the Women's Library

"Is 'family-friendly' a euphemism for noisy children? I don't think so – I think 'family-friendly' means a museum is welcoming to everyone, that it has interpretation that is clear and understandable for all and engages with all age groups in ways which are familiar to them.

A museum needs to learn and develop through its interaction with its audiences. The Women's Library at London Metropolitan University often covers challenging subjects, from the women's liberation movement to women and work. But the participation and feedback we get from our school and family visitors is essential to gaining perspective on these subjects.

After all, museums are all about people and you therefore need to engage with the widest range of people to give those collections meaning."

Leigh-Anne Stradeski
chief executive, Eureka! The National Children's Museum

"As a children's museum Eureka! is by its nature family friendly and is deliberately designed to work on different levels so that different generations and age groups can get the most out of the experience. But where the content is more specialist and sophisticated, being family friendly may not be a priority.

It is partly the role of children's museums to nurture the next generation of adult museum-goers but by not being family friendly, others send out a message that museums are only for a specific demographic. As educational and cultural attractions, it's important that all museums are as inclusive as possible to all. Being family friendly shouldn't be a token, it should be part of the fabric of the venue."

On top of the world

Being part of a World Heritage Site can help museums attract visitors and form new partnerships, writes *Deborah Mulhearn*

The English Lake District, the Historic Dockyard Chatham in Kent and the slate industry of north Wales: these places have little in common except that they are all hoping to become world heritage sites.

Along with seven other sites, they are on the UK government's "tentative" list to be nominated for consideration by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), which confers World Heritage Site (WHS) status.

It could be a long wait. The twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow are ahead in the queue, having already been nominated, and since the government slimmed down the process a few years ago and agreed with Unesco to put forward no more than one a year, none from the tentative list will be nominated until 2013. Even then, there is no guarantee that Unesco will approve the listing. The most recent UK site to be inscribed as a World Heritage Site, in 2009, was the Pontcysyllte aqueduct and canal in north Wales, which waited more than 10 years.

Unesco set up the World Heritage Convention in 1972 to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage. Since then, 936 sites in 187 countries have been inscribed onto the world heritage list, ranging from the pyramids of Giza to the Taj Mahal and the Great Barrier Reef. The UK has 28 world heritage sites, from city centres to uninhabited islands. The Giant's Causeway, Ironbridge Gorge, St Kilda, Stonehenge, Durham Cathedral and Castle, and the frontiers of the Roman empire were among the first batch of UK sites to be inscribed in 1986 and celebrate their 25th anniversaries this year.

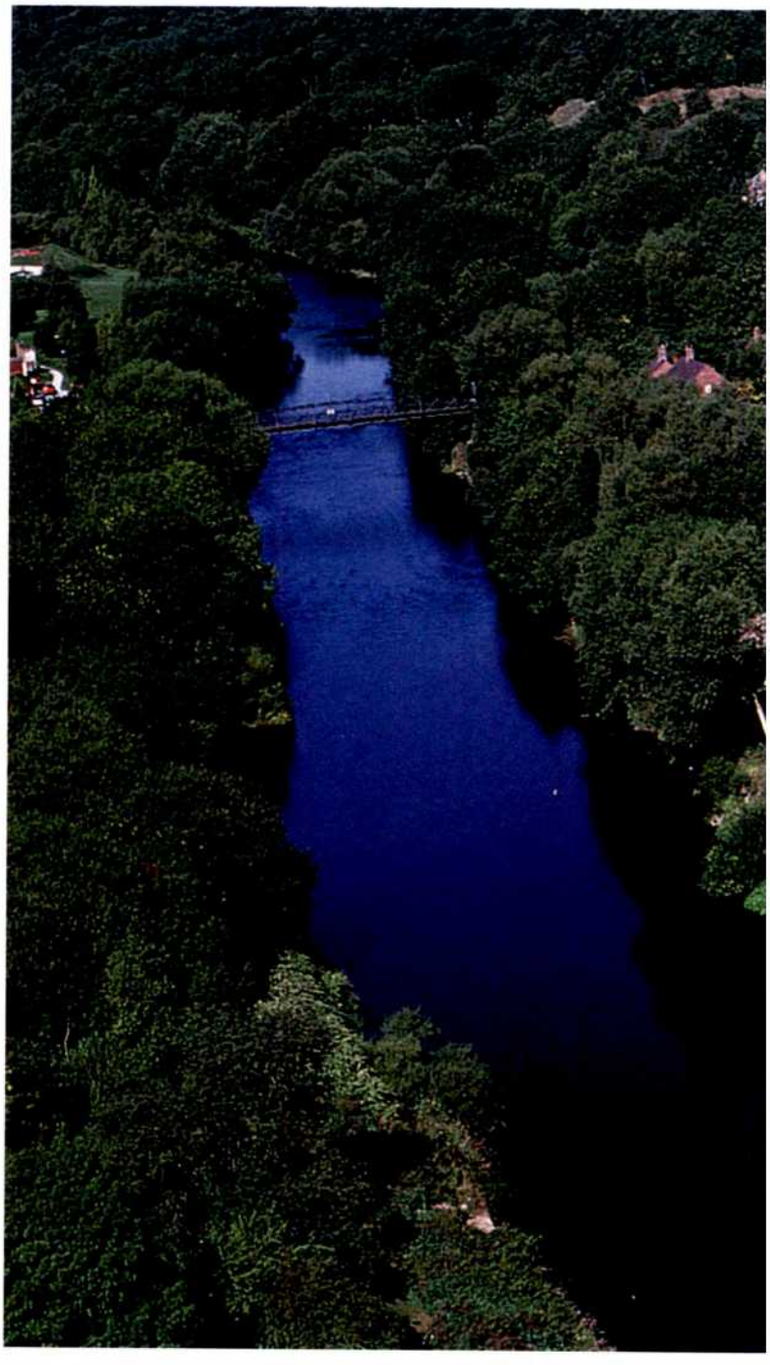
WHS status is conferred for "outstanding universal value" and brings recognition and kudos for their unique natural phenomena or cultural, industrial and historical significance, but no direct financial gain. Sites must fulfil WHS criteria to retain their listing and can lose their status if they flout them. UK sites have to work with English Heritage to protect historic environments and controversies can arise – WHS status is threatened at the Giant's Causeway and Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City because of plans to build, respectively, a golf resort and tall office blocks.

Most of the UK's world heritage sites have museums within them and, while many of the museums worked on the bids, they often don't overtly promote their status. Visitors to world heritage sites are not necessarily aware of the WHS status, what it means or the reasons for its bestowal.

So is it worth the long and frustrating process of reviews, feasibility studies, complex management plans and tussles with local authorities and private owners?

"Every WHS site is unique and all have different entry points," says Mechtild Rossler, chief of the policy and statutory meetings section at the Unesco World Heritage Centre. ▶

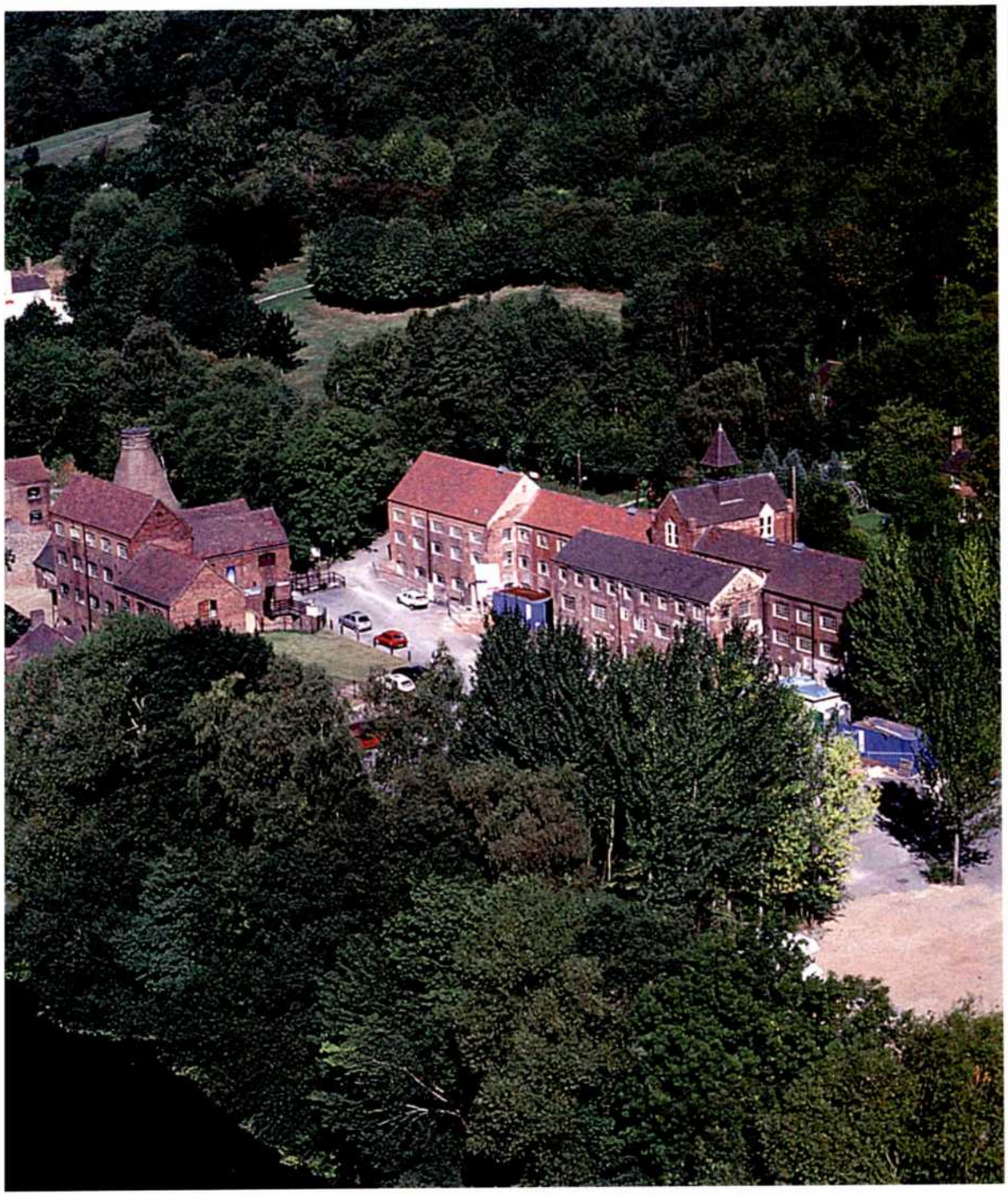
Previous page: The Historic Dockyard Chatham, Kent, is hoping to become a World Heritage Site Right: Ironbridge Gorge is one of the UK's 28 world heritage sites



New ways to visit the world's heritage sites

Nothing replaces the experience of seeing the genuine article, but not all world heritage sites are accessible. A conference in Edinburgh this month – I Know Where I'm Going: Remote Access to World Heritage Sites from St Kilda to Uluru (23-24 November) – will explore the opportunities new technologies can bring to Unesco world heritage sites and other cultural sites.

"We want to break down the barriers between new technology industries and the heritage sector," says Mechtild Rossler, chief of the policy and statutory meetings section at the Unesco World Heritage Centre and a keynote speaker at the conference.



Top: Stonehenge, Avebury and related sites won world heritage status in 1986. Above: Museum Square at Historic Dockyard Chatham. Below: St Kilda is the UK's only mixed World Heritage Site with a listing for cultural and natural elements

© JAMES BRITTAIN (CHATHAM AND PREVIOUS SPREAD), © ENGLISH HERITAGE

Scanning techniques, mobile and satellite technologies, apps and social media all have potential applications in heritage settings.

Rossler says: "We are looking at ways of linking sites that are remote or inaccessible, such as St Kilda or the Lascaux Caves, but also serial sites – places which are listed as one site, but are dispersed, for example the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage route which covers sites from northern France to Spain, or large sites such as the Great Wall of China, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, or the 90-mile long Dorset and Devon coast.

"If people can see satellite images that give an overall view, Google Earth images, maps of the site, either on websites or at related museums and visitor centres, they will be better informed and able to plan their next steps, even book hotels," adds Rossler.

New technologies could allow visitors to see objects in storage, exhibits from different collections that link to other WHS sites, small films and related material.

"There are fascinating opportunities for museums because they can give a local dimension and can add links to their pages," Rossler says. "Remote viewing can help visitors, site managers, scientists and other heritage professionals."

"Because museums operate at all levels, from local to national to global, they can provide layers of information to help visitors make historic connections and gain a better understanding of the value of WHS."

The Historic Dockyard Chatham has been on the tentative list for many years and hopes to be the next UK nomination.

"The main issue for us is to protect what we have and change perceptions of the site," says Bill Ferris, chief executive of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust. The bid is based on the quality of the heritage and Chatham's role in maintaining Britain's global influence over two centuries. "We are proclaimed to be the best example of a dockyard, with every stage of wooden warship building and with the dockyard defences still intact. The sightlines are the same as the ones Nelson saw."

Despite its illustrious history and distance – 28 minutes by train – from London, Chatham is not a major destination, and Ferris is convinced that WHS status would be a quality stamp to draw in more visitors.

"There are very few drawbacks from a museum point of view," agrees Steve Miller, chief executive of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, which this year celebrated 25 years of WHS status, inscribed in 1986 for its role in the origins of the industrial revolution.

"There's a world of difference here from St Kilda, where there are no people," he says. "We are a large inhabited site with residents, businesses and 10 museums and the visible symbol of the bridge that draws in 1 million tourists a year. We work with a multiplicity of partners from Telford and Wrekin Council to the Woodland Trust to keep standards of conservation, and everyone is on board."

Working in partnership

Each Ironbridge Gorge partner has its own plan and also worked on an overall strategic approach for the 25th anniversary to coordinate branding and marketing material. There is also the Unesco-approved management plan, to be updated in 2012. "It's been a really special year that has raised the already high awareness of the WHS status, allowing us to reach new audiences," says Miller. There is no need to restrict visitors as long as you put in the infrastructure, he adds. "Tourism is an important part of the local economy and the WHS status is an essential part of this that works really well for us."

The City of Bath was inscribed in 1987 for its Georgian architecture and its Roman archaeology.

"It's hard to quantify the benefits, but the WHS status is extremely relevant to us," says Stephen Bird, the head of heritage services at Bath & North East Somerset Council and head of the Roman Baths. "The raison d'être of Bath is the hot springs, and the main one comes up in the middle of our site. It's a reminder that despite all the monumental architecture around us, the hot springs are

fragile and ephemeral. We know very little about the geological system beneath them, and this has to be taken into account, for example whenever there is deep piling anywhere near the city centre."

Working with WHS status

But the WHS status shouldn't be a barrier to development, says Bird. Bath has introduced successful contemporary design onto the site, notably architect Nicholas Grimshaw's plate glass Thermae Bath Spa building, which reflects the old buildings.

"People are concerned about change, but if you are working in the right materials and proportions, and have a robust management plan, you are not threatening the WHS status," Bird says. "We don't want to reproduce Georgian pastiche as it's not innovative."

In Liverpool, which was added to the world heritage list in 2004 for its historic docks, Pier Head and Georgian and Victorian centre, there has been continuous building activity. The new Museum of Liverpool within the WHS area is a bold contemporary design, but one that respects its historic environment.

"It's a balance between commercial and cultural interests," says David Fleming, the director of National Museums Liverpool. "It's a normal public space and people don't want it over-preserved. The world heritage status should act not as a tyranny but as a pause for thought. Museum black boxes are not appropriate on a world heritage site, and the Museum of Liverpool is unusual for a museum in that it has views onto the site and the views have been the wow factor."

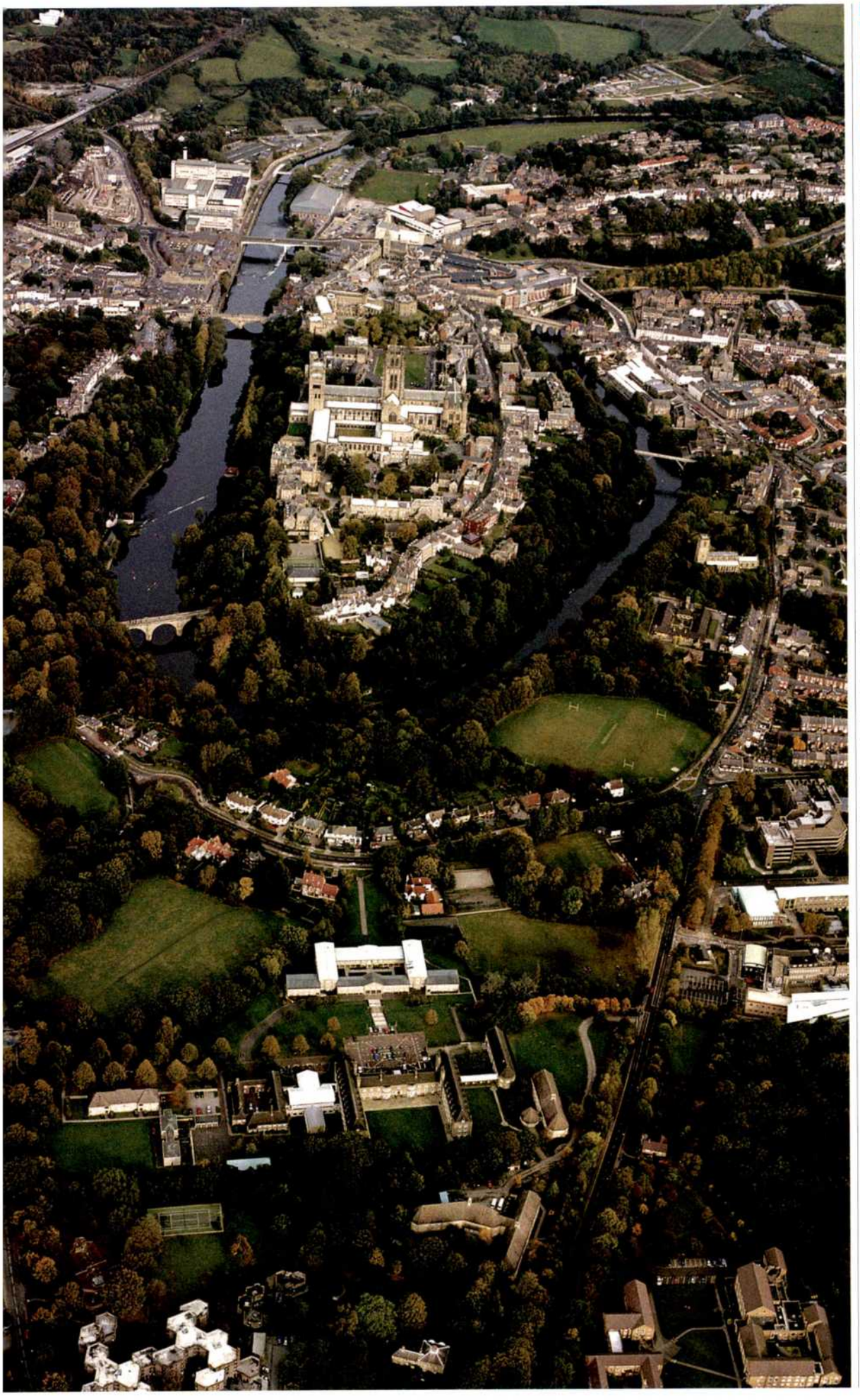
The Merseyside Maritime Museum also plans to open up views that were blocked off when the Albert Dock buildings were renovated in the 1980s. "Yes, the material may be sensitive but there are compromises with micro-climates. Conservation and environmental control is more advanced now so we have greater opportunities," says Fleming.

"We should be making more of what's outside so the visitor gets a sense of the river and docks while reading about emigration or the battle of the Atlantic," he says. "It's another way of reconnecting local people with their city's history, and the reasons why it was inscribed as a World Heritage Site."

Deborah Mulhearn is a freelance journalist

Left: for Bath, world heritage status is beneficial. Right: Durham's World Heritage Site includes the castle and cathedral

© COLIN HAWKINS 2008 (BATH), JO WHITTAKER (DURHAM)



World heritage is about global citizenship

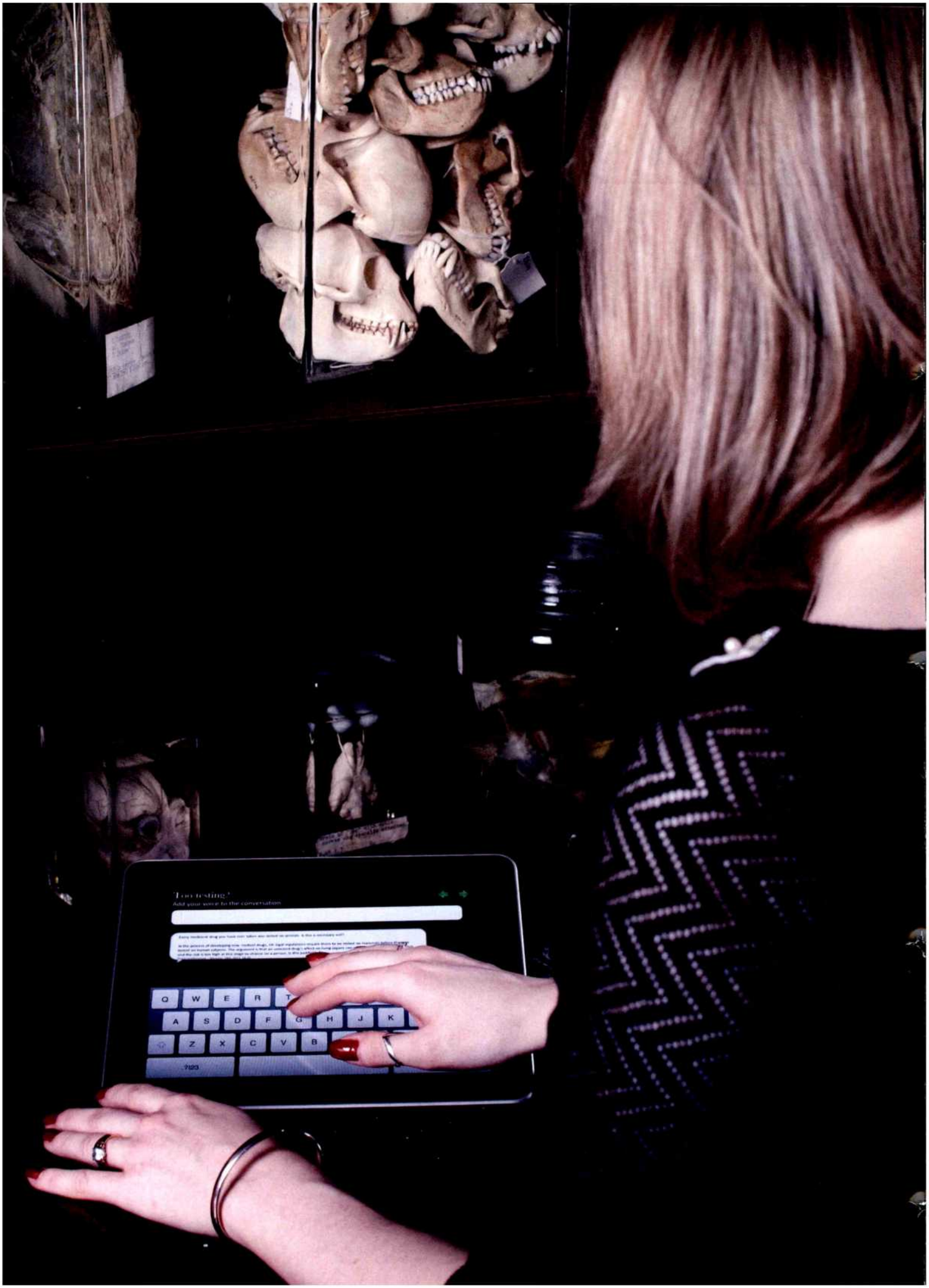
Durham's World Heritage Site (WHS) visitor centre opened in June in a renovate almshouse on the city's Owengate.

"The idea is to make more of the World Heritage Site status and help people appreciate it," says Seif El Rashidi, Durham WHS coordinator, whose post wa created three years ago to deliver the visitor centre anc website project. The centre gives an overview and uses information panels, terminal and interactive maps to explain what a World Herita Site is, and local information about Durham and why it ha WHS status.

"You'd be amazed how fe people know," says El Rashi There is also a space for events and exhibitions and the centre acts as a forum f local people to air their view and concerns.

"World heritage is about global citizenship and responsibility and we thoug the visitor centre should convey this in a contempora sense," says El Rashidi. The 25th anniversary celebratio of gaining WHS status have ranged from events with African drummers to Polish spiritual choirs. The website like the visitor centre, make links to other local attractio and events.

"We were keen to promo the site before people get here," El Rashidi says. "We wanted something captivati that didn't read like a lecture Our focus is to improve the quality of the experience fo visitors, to breathe new life into the spaces and inspire more people to visit, beyonc those who we know already find heritage enjoyable. Durham has many visitors but more are welcome. The are not a threat to the fabric of the buildings, which are defensive and robust."


Too testing?
Add your voice to the conversation

Ancient and modern: the Petrie Museum, part of University College London, offers its visitors the latest technologies to discover collections

Great expectations

How are museums adapting to the brave new world that they find themselves in, asks *Maurice Davies*

I've been talking to leading museum people about their priorities and plans. Here, I look at how museums and galleries are rethinking their purpose and their priorities. Next month, I'll examine how they are changing the ways they work.

With less funding and, in England at least, less political pressure to widen audiences, I wondered if I'd find museums battered, neglected and inward-looking. Far from it: museum directors seem to be as ambitious as ever, with a clearer sense of focus.

Carole Souter, chief executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), says she has found the continued ambition to do new things very surprising: "I had assumed there'd be a pause, at the very least, but applications to us for really new, exciting, innovative projects are coming through at a faster rate than I've seen in my eight-and-a-half years at HLF. People are absolutely determined to keep going for it. They have the self-confidence as they know there is a [public] appetite for them to do good things."

In part, museums are doing "good things" to keep funders on board. "You must carry on, be positive and have energy and plans or people will lose confidence in you," says Janet Barnes, the chief executive of York Museums Trust. "To keep faith with our main funders, we have to align ourselves with the ambitions of the council and be embedded in the city. We have to keep relevant."

But there's much more to it than chasing funding. There's a hunger to have a greater impact. I found people want to make their museums genuinely useful to the local community and meaningful to individuals. Barnes thinks it's "wonderful" and "fantastic" when museums do something to improve an individual's life. The goal is that you've been useful to somebody, she says.

At the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Sue Hayward, heritage manager at Bournemouth Borough Council, says although the museum's work with disadvantaged people may only reach small numbers, it's those small numbers of people that tend to cause difficulties for society. The impact has been significant when, for▶

© UCL/MATT CLAYTON

example, a boy excluded from school says that a museum-led project is "the best thing that has happened to me in my life".

Hayward says the museum is becoming better connected to local organisations and with them it is "helping Bournemouth reposition itself as a more cultural town".

York Museums Trust wants to have a greater cultural impact, too: "We've moved from being a museum and gallery service into being much more of a cultural provider. Our events will be a very important part of the cultural life of the city," says Barnes.

Tony Butler, director of the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket, also aims to enhance culture in the local area. "It's not just about our big buildings and big collections," Butler says. "If others are better at harbouring the cultural traditions of the area, the museum's role should be to support them."

So, rather than trying to attract people to its own May Day celebration, the museum could instead take part in a well-established May Day event in a nearby village. It might get fewer visitors on May Day itself, but it would be playing a bigger part in local culture. Several museums I spoke to want to develop such reciprocal relationships.

Butler sees the museum less as a "knowledge organisation" and more as a "connector", putting people and organisations in touch with each other. He has ambitions for it to take on an "activist" role.

"We want to find out what issues really matter to people – housing, transport – and use the collections to support programming and events around those themes," Butler says. "The museum would respond and be a provocateur in addressing contemporary rural problems."

Butler has developed the Happy Museum project over the past few years, so more museums could see how they can make a difference to local communities. Godalming Museum successfully bid for Happy Museum funding to work with local environmental activist groups.

"The more we do with community groups the better and more lively the museum is," says Godalming Museum curator Alison Pattison. She thinks things work best of all when a group approaches the museum with its own idea. (I'll look a co-production more next month.) Pattison says a community museum has a clarity about what it is trying to achieve, connecting local people and making their heritage meaningful. There are benefits from being in an area with few tourists.

'Our events will be part of the city's cultural life' *Janet Barnes, chief executive, York Museums Trust*

"You don't need to extrapolate from the local to the general, you can just deal with the particular," says Pattison.

At the HLF, Souter believes it's not only local museums that must engage communities: "It's perhaps more challenging for a national museum to work out how best every part of its organisation can have real impact on community engagement and development because it's got so many communities to serve: tourists, serious scholars, the very local community... It must be endlessly exciting to think about serving all those communities."

National Museums Scotland (NMS) does "different things for different audiences", says its director Gordon Rintoul. "It's not just saying: 'This is what we're going to produce; here you are; that's it for five years.' It's about an ongoing engagement because the views of audiences change. You need to make the relationship a live one."

Rintoul thinks "access" sounds too inactive. I found that people working in museums increasingly prefer the word engagement. Learning may be in decline as a term, too, perhaps because schools work is ticking along but is not the priority it once was. (One director talked of schools work being a "gravy train", but one that doesn't cover all its costs.) ▶

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'Project applications are coming to us at a faster rate than I have seen in eight years' *Carole Souter, chief executive, HLF*

'Connections to local organisations are helping Bournemouth reposition itself' *Sue Hayward, heritage manager, Bournemouth Borough Council*

The end of permanence?

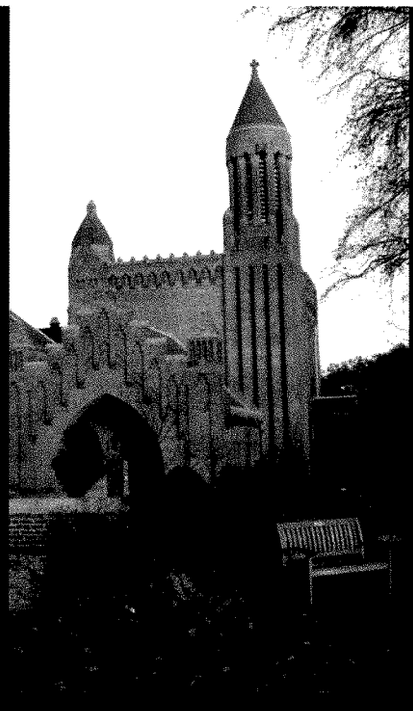
Museums used to talk of "permanent" collections and "permanent" displays. Are those days over as we learn that sustainability means adaptability, not resisting change? With collections under review, disposal commonplace and an acceptance that things decay (however good your preventive conservation), collections don't seem quite so permanent any more. But what about permanent displays?

"We won't have displays that last for 20 years"
Janet Barnes, chief executive, York Museums Trust

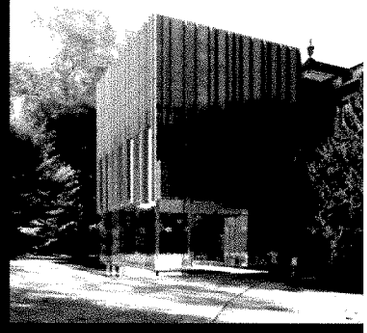
"You have to reinvent yourself fairly regularly. You have to do it quite cheaply and the main barrier is in our heads"
Sally MacDonald, director of museums and collections, University College London

"People could contribute as they go round; shape the museum so it reflects their heritage"
Alison Pattison, curator, Godalming Museum

Value Engineering Fundraising



Specialist knowledge of HLF and ACE



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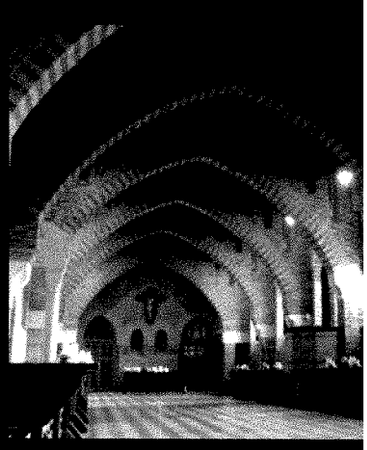

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The end of growth?

Museums have had over a decade of growth in terms of buildings, audiences and budgets. But is growth still good?

"Growth in terms of buildings will be thought about much harder in future. I think people will be looking more at how to use what they've got more effectively"
Carole Souter, chief executive, Heritage Lottery Fund

"Museums ought to be looking at how new developments are going to be financially sustainable"
Gordon Rintoul, director, National Museums Scotland

"The days of assumed growth are definitely over"
Gaby Porter, consultant

"There's a limit of volume – but I don't think we're there yet"
Janet Barnes, chief executive, York Museums Trust

Another word declining in popularity is diversity, which is losing ground to community. Diversity and learning are not declining in importance, but they are being set within the broader arena of community engagement. (Interestingly Arts Council England's – ACE – recent statements about museums talk extensively of access, learning and diversity, so the fall from favour of these words may be shortlived.)

In a nice, business-like, use of language, Rintoul says the NMS chairman talks about "leveraging the collections". That is, "using collections in a much more active way physically and digitally".

"We need to liberate the richness we have in our collection," says Barnes at York Museums Trust. "We need to invest in curatorship and research to have new rich stories that we can engage audiences with. It's boring and glib unless you've got new stuff to tell.

"It's curatorial expertise and research with public outcomes," Barnes adds. "We're very conscious of the public outcomes of all our work."

Consultant Gaby Porter agrees: "It has to be about engagement of people with collections, not collections themselves."

As a Museums Association board member, Porter helped to construct the argument to the arts council that excellence does not lie intrinsically in collections, but in the ways in which museums stimulate people's engagement with collections.

"ACE seem to have largely accepted the argument, but I have a lingering worry that, in assessing funding applications, ACE might still take a rather supplier-led view of museums and end up valuing collections and scholarship for their own sake, rather than for their public impact," Porter says.

Excellence is a word museums will need to get used to. And excellence certainly isn't about great buildings alone.

"Capital investment is now being thought of as improving engagement rather than the basics," according to Souter at the HLF. "You can't be a great place to visit unless you are engaged with your local community."

'We need to reinvent ourselves regularly' *Sally MacDonald, director of museums and collections, UCL*

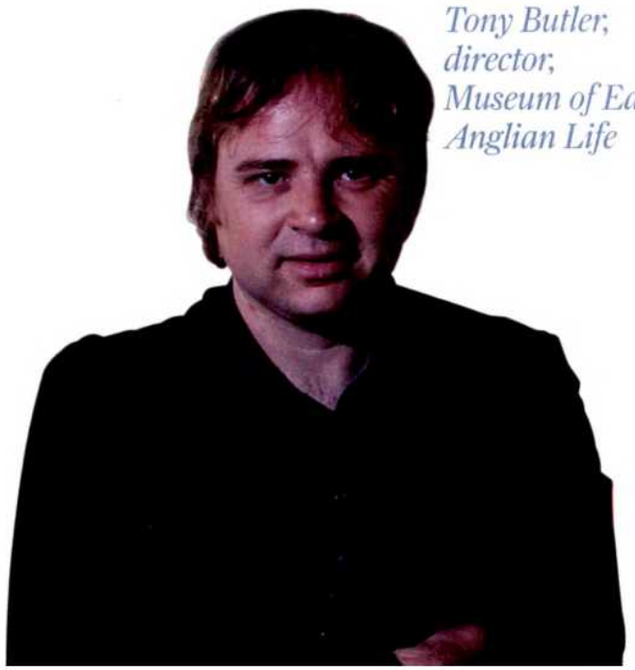
Butler at the Museum of East Anglian Life sees museum buildings as valuable community spaces: modern-day village greens or city squares. Like collections, museum buildings exist to be used and useful – otherwise they will become the content-free white elephants people feared in the early days of the lottery. In all sorts of museums, there's growing interest in creative programming rather than simply operating buildings. For Butler, success is about being interesting to people. "I'd rather do interesting things than blockbusters that get queues out of the door," he says.

Sally MacDonald, director of museums and collections at University College London, says what matters is "depth of engagement, not numbers". She adds: "We're not very good at capturing and conveying what people get out of projects or sessions. We need better ways of recording depth of engagement so that we aren't always talking about attendance numbers."

MacDonald is passionate about "interesting and experimental work to get quality of engagement". But she says this doesn't have to be done in a building open to the public. She hopes new technologies will make it possible to tag objects so they can be lent securely by museums to all sorts of people to be used in different ways and places.

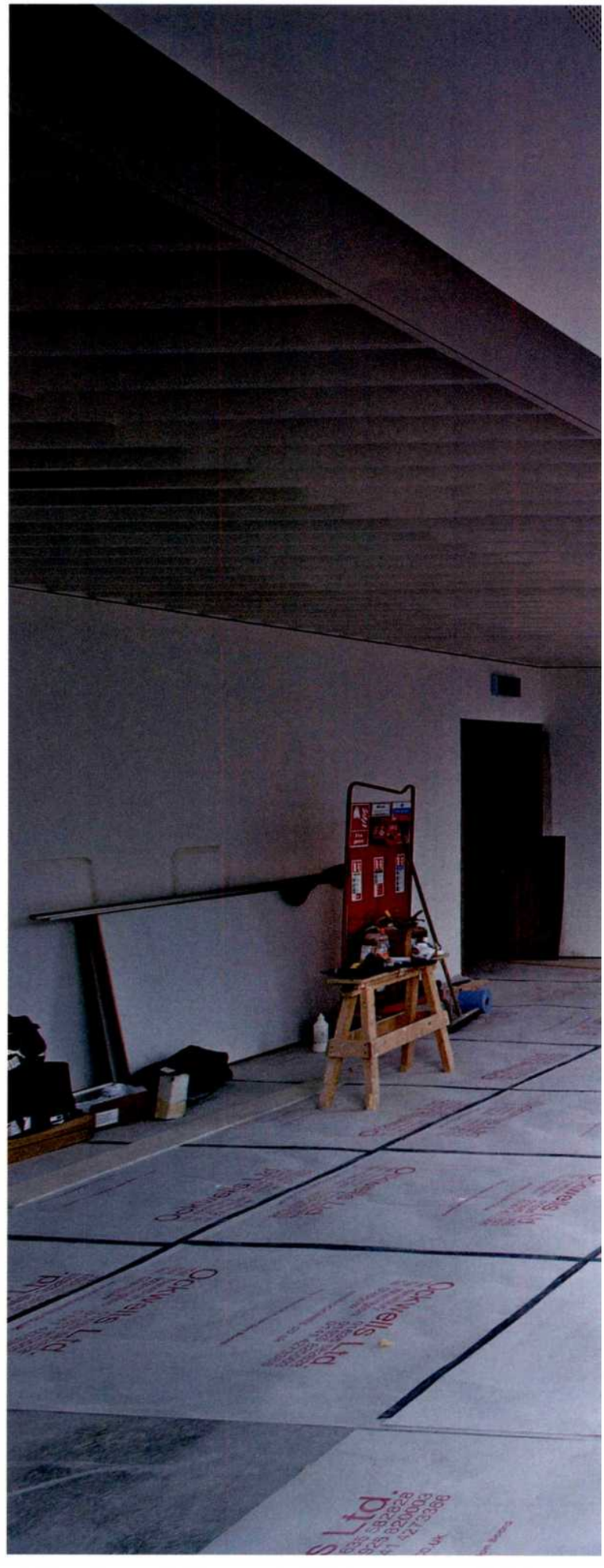
Online, on site or out in the community, museums are increasingly being judged not by their buildings, their collections or their expertise, but by the impact that they have – how useful they are to individuals, to places and to communities.

'We want to find out what issues really matter' *Tony Butler, director, Museum of East Anglian Life*



Increased exposure

Patrick Henry tells *Simon Stephens* about the Open Eye's journey from grassroots arts organisation to high-profile photography gallery. Photographs by *Phil Sayer*



Liverpool's Open Eye Gallery, which is reopening on 5 November in a purpose-built venue on the city's waterfront, has come a long way from the days when it was firebombed by a right-wing group that used to regularly target the radical bookshop next door.

The gallery has its roots in a campaigning organisation that promoted film, video and sound recording as well as photography and was run on a shoestring. Out of this sprung Open Eye, which opened one of the first UK galleries dedicated to photography in 1977.

Patrick Henry joined Open Eye at its director in 2004 when it was going through one of its periodic episodes of strife. He was pleased to get the job, but there was not much competition: he soon found out why.

"There wasn't a long queue of topnotch candidates as most people in the field knew better than I did that it was going to be a very tough job," he says. "I asked to see the books and asked the basic questions so I knew it was going to be a handful but, as with many things in life, you don't know how much of a handful until you are in the middle of it."

Among the problems Henry had to deal with were staffing and board issues, massive rent arrears and the end of the lease of the gallery's home, which was not in a particularly suitable area anyway.

"I started in 2004 and the lease ended in 2007," says Henry. "The biggest problem was that in ten years the rent had gone up 150%, maybe more. There was every reason to think that if we stayed put for another ten years our business model would fall apart as we would not be able to pay the rent. So we had two problems: we needed cheaper accommodation and we needed better accommodation."

In the end, Henry's work to rebuild the ▶

Patrick Henry at a glance

Patrick Henry has been the director of the Open Eye Gallery since 2004. Before that he was curator of exhibitions at the National Media Museum in Bradford and for six years prior to that he was a freelance photographer based in Manchester. He specialised in music photography.

He studied history of art (BA) and cultural history (MA) at the University of Manchester. He has been a member of the Liverpool Biennial's curatorial team since 2004 and is a board member of Look2011, Liverpool's international photography festival.

Open Eye at a glance

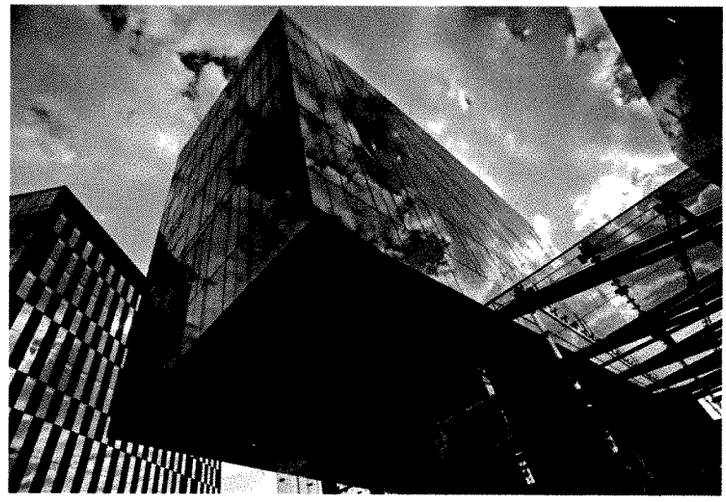
Open Eye emerged as part of an organisation called the Merseyside Visual Communications Unit (MCVU), which was created in 1973 with a mission to "make more people aware of the many positive ways in which film, photography, video and sound recording can be used in a social, cultural and educative context". In 1976 MCVU moved into the former Grapes Hotel in central Liverpool and the Open Eye Gallery followed soon after, occupying what had been the public bar.

In 1989, due to the building's increasing dilapidation, Open Eye moved to Bold Street, forming an umbrella organisation with the Women's Independent Cinema House, Community Productions Merseyside and the Community Arts Trust.

In 1995, grappling with funding, premises and organisational problems, Open Eye left Bold Street and moved to the Concert Square area of Liverpool's Ropewalks. In November 1996 the gallery was relaunched on Wood Street as Open Eye Photographic and Media Arts. This month the gallery moves to new premises on the Liverpool waterfront. It will open with exhibitions of the work of photographers Mitch Epstein and Chris Steele-Perkins.

Open Eye receives £28,000 a year from Liverpool City Council. And as an Arts Council England national portfolio organisation, it will receive £191,193 in 2012-13, £195,590 in 2013-14 and £200,676 in 2014-15.

It has the equivalent of four full-time members of staff, including director Patrick Henry and curator Karen Newman.



Open Eye Gallery's new home is part of the Mann Island development on Liverpool's waterfront

board also led to a solution to Open Eye's venue problems. One of the options was to move to a new arts school building being developed by John Moores University. To strengthen his hand in the negotiations, Henry appointed Stephen Parry, the managing director of a local regeneration company, Neptune Developments, to the board.

"He was very helpful in negotiations with the university but he also mentioned he was working on a development called Mann Island and said if we were interested we could talk about it as an alternative to the school of art. It was immediately apparent that it was better for us on every level so we withdrew from the arts school conversation."

But the saga did not end there as the global financial crisis that started in 2007 slowed the progress of the Mann Island development. This delay jeopardised the £400,000 that Open Eye had secured from the regional development agency (RDA). One of the coalition government's first acts after it took power last year was to abolish RDAs and, as a result, RDA-funded projects with zero spend against them were cancelled.

Saving the project

"I got a call saying 'your project has been pulled and if you check the fine print of the offer we are in our rights to do that'," Henry says. "We managed to fight our way back and get the funding secured again but I think the decisive reason that we were able to do that was that we had a partner, in the shape of Neptune, who understood the terms of engagement. Property development at that level is very political and on our own it is doubtful that we would have been able to defend ourselves. We were very, very lucky."

But all is now well and the 750,000 Open Eye Gallery will open on 5 November. The venue, which is a stone's throw from the recently opened Museum of Liverpool on the city's regenerated waterfront, is split over two floors.

In the main gallery, Open Eye will present an international programme of contemporary photography, which will be complemented by changing exhibitions from its archive of photographs in the first-floor gallery. Open Eye will also commission a series called Wall Works, large-scale graphic installations for the facade of the gallery, which opens onto a large covered public square.

Henry acknowledges that the move is a big leap for the organisation, which only has the equivalent of four full-time staff. Open Eye received about 12,500 visitors a year at its old site, but Henry is expecting up to 80,000 at the new venue.

"The level of ambition and the profile of what we are doing is a huge step, and we are left with a gap between our basic resource level from our regular funding and the demands of our new location."

Henry says that the gallery's revenue funding from Arts Council England (ACE) and the city council has flatlined when inflation is taken into account. He also points to the Photographers' Gallery in London, which was given £3.5m by the arts council for its redevelopment. Open Eye received £100,000 from ACE for its scheme.

"With a small amount of money we've done a really ambitious project, which I'm really proud of," says Henry. "That is great for us, but what we were not able to do was persuade people to increase our funding."

Despite the challenges, Henry is looking forward to the opportunities for engaging audiences in the gallery's new location. Its main opening exhibition will be American photographer Mitch Epstein's American Power series, which examines how energy is produced and used in the US landscape and how this relates to nature, government and big business. The work was awarded the this year's £65,000 Prix Pictet photography award and is Epstein's first solo UK show.

The pleasures of the archive

The archive exhibition will be the Pleasure Principle by Chris Steele-Perkins, a study of England in the 1980s by the Magnum photographer. The Open Eye Archive contains about 1,600 prints by more than 100 photographers. It has been knocked into shape in recent years by specialist volunteer help and Henry is keen to make best use of it.

He is also keen to engage more audiences through social media and to look at new opportunities for raising revenue, such as through corporate hire. All this while continuing to stay in touch with the rapidly changing trends in contemporary photography.

Photographs at Open Eye's new home will be displayed on clean white walls, a far cry from when it was based in the former Grapes Hotel in the late 1970s and showed images in what was the public bar. The gallery may have moved on a lot since those days but it is still a small organisation with big aims.

"With a core staff team of four it is very difficult to meet the ambitions that you inevitably have," Henry says. "Small arts organisations, if they are run with any enthusiasm, which they inevitably are, try and punch above their weight. It's a very problematic thing, but it's what we all do."

Above: Demonstration, South Wales (c.1935) by Edith Tudor-Hart, from Open Eye's archive. Below: Amos Coal Power Plant in Raymond City, West Virginia, 2004. It is part of Mitch Epstein's American Power series

Above: Blaze, Dancer, Pier Head, by Michelle Sank, from Open Eye's print archive

© MITCH EPSTEIN, COURTESY THOMAS ZANDER GALERIE, COLOGNE (AMERICAN POWER) © EDITH TUDOR-HART, COURTESY OF WOLF SILBERT (SOUTH WALES) © MICHELLE SANK, FROM THE WATERS EDGE (PIER HEAD)

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The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Uniforms and musical instruments are among the objects on show at a heritage centre dedicated to the Salvation Army. By *Louise Gray*

Where The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre is housed on the third floor of the imposing William Booth College in south London. Opened in 1929, it is the training facility for Salvation Army officers.

What "The museum explores the life of the Salvation Army from its beginnings as a small Christian organisation in 1865, to its role today as a global movement," says Naomi Sharp, the centre's archivist and deputy director. "It has a strong interactive element, displaying three short films and has a listening point for an oral history project." There is also a library and archive collection open to researchers in the reading room.

Opened The organisation first had a museum in the 1920s, which moved to various sites and closed for several periods over the years. The current museum, designed by Haley Sharpe, opened in June 2011 and can be visited from Tuesdays to Fridays.

Collection "It's very varied; there is everything from early posters and members' registers to a hard-hat worn on 9/11 by emergency workers," Sharp says. Unsurprisingly, given the Salvation Army's reputation for outfits and bands, there are plenty of uniforms and musical instruments.

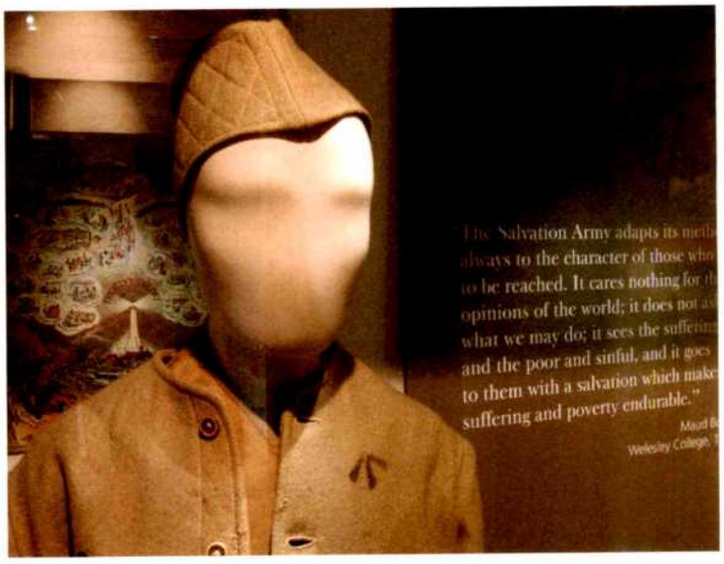
Help at hand There is a team of six: a director, two archivists, a museum professional, a social historian and a conservator. Two of the team are Salvation Army officers.

Budget The centre is funded by the Salvation Army itself. Admission is free.

Visits Figures not available yet.

Highlights Sharp selects a bone skeleton pin badge worn bya member of the Skeleton Army, an anti-Salvationist group active during the 1880s. "It is a tiny object, but it symbolises the depth of opposition that the organisation was facing at the time," she says.

Survival tip "Stay positive and ambitious," says Sharp. "Our museum was set up on a small budget in a small space, but we strive to have big, creative ideas about the best ways to use our collections."



Sticky moment "We reopened our sister museum, the William Booth Birthplace Museum in Nottingham, after a major redesign, a month before the heritage centre," Sharp says. "It was a lot of work to organise two major projects at once, and we ended up with only 24 hours to install the whole of the birthplace collection. It was a long day – but we felt very proud at the finish."

Future project "Our focus is on marketing and getting visitors," Sharp says. Updating its website and putting the archive catalogue online are also on the agenda.

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/history

Top: the prison uniform worn by WT Stead in the 1880s. He was a campaigning journalist with links to the Salvation Army.
Left: a cornet and items from an army farm in Essex.
Below: a skull pin produced by the Skeleton Army

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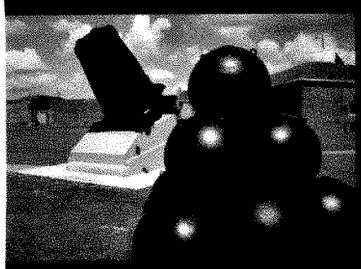


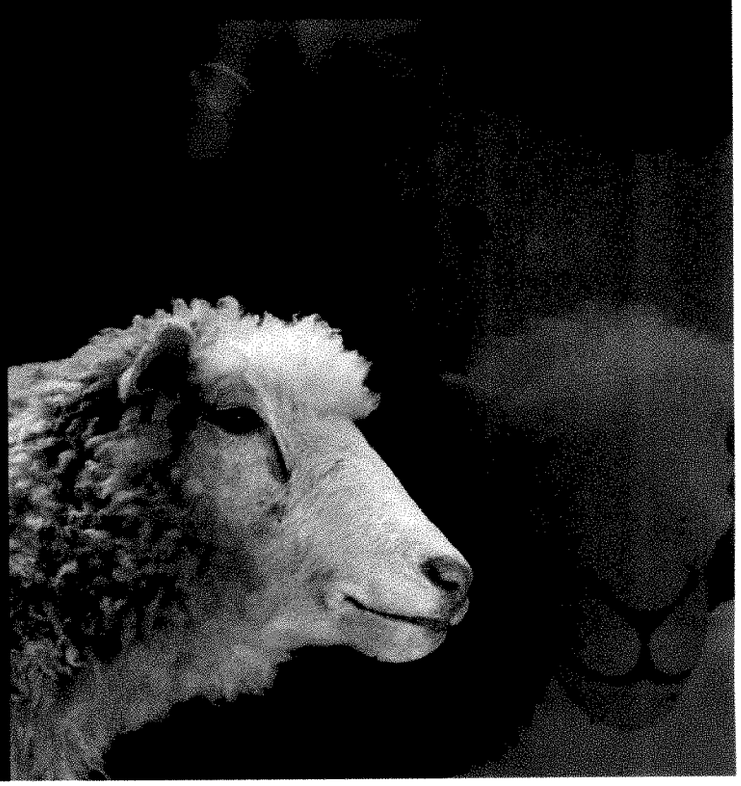
Fort Nelson, Hampshire, p50

Sammy Ofer Wing, National Maritime Museum, London, p46

Reviews

'Like humans, bombards, sakers and coehorns were fickle – fully capable of blowing up in your face, even if treated with respect' *Jonathan Conlin* on Fort Nelson, Hampshire

National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, p42



Teignmouth & Shaldon Museum, Devon, p54

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National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

Peter Lewis and *Neil Johnson-Symington* find much to admire at the redeveloped National Museum of Scotland

Above: jewellery that belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots, forms an iconic display in the Scottish gallery in the new National Museum of Scotland. Right: the four-storey Grand Gallery. Below: a Sri Lankan performance mask in the museum's World Cultures gallery

The knowledge society

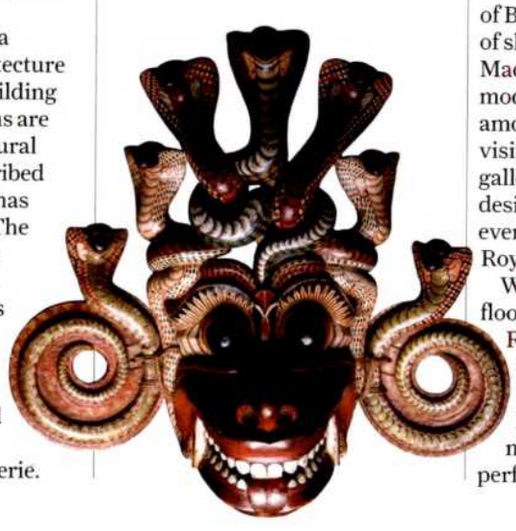
In 1861 Prince Albert laid the foundation stone for the Industrial Museum in Edinburgh, an institution that morphed into the Royal Museum. The serious newspapers of the day assured concerned citizens that the new museum would eschew "wantonness".

But 150 years later, the revitalised and redesigned National Museum of Scotland, a marriage of the Royal Museum and the Museum of Scotland, had a very different opening ceremony. In Chambers Street a giant animatronic Tyrannosaurus Rex pranced to the music of Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers, while costumed actors mingled with the crowd, and performers abseiled from the roof against a background of Chinese firecrackers. An 11-year-old schoolgirl knocked three times on the new entrance doors demanding admission. This was granted, heralded by a fanfare on a replica carnyx Celtic war horn. During the course of that first day the museum was experienced, whether wantonly or otherwise, by more than 22,000 visitors.

The original foundation stone laid by Prince Albert read: "Showing Scotland to the world, and the world to Scotland." The purpose of the museum clearly remains the same. A sizable chunk of the private funding came from the kilted diaspora, those worldwide Scots exiles who claim with justification to have had a disproportionate effect on world civilisation.

The American Arthur Herman, whose father once occupied a brief professorship in Edinburgh, was inspired to write The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created Our World and Everything In It. National Museums Scotland (NMS) director Gordon Rintoul and his colleagues might not indulge in such crude chauvinism, but that self-confident belief in all things Scottish imbues everything that they show.

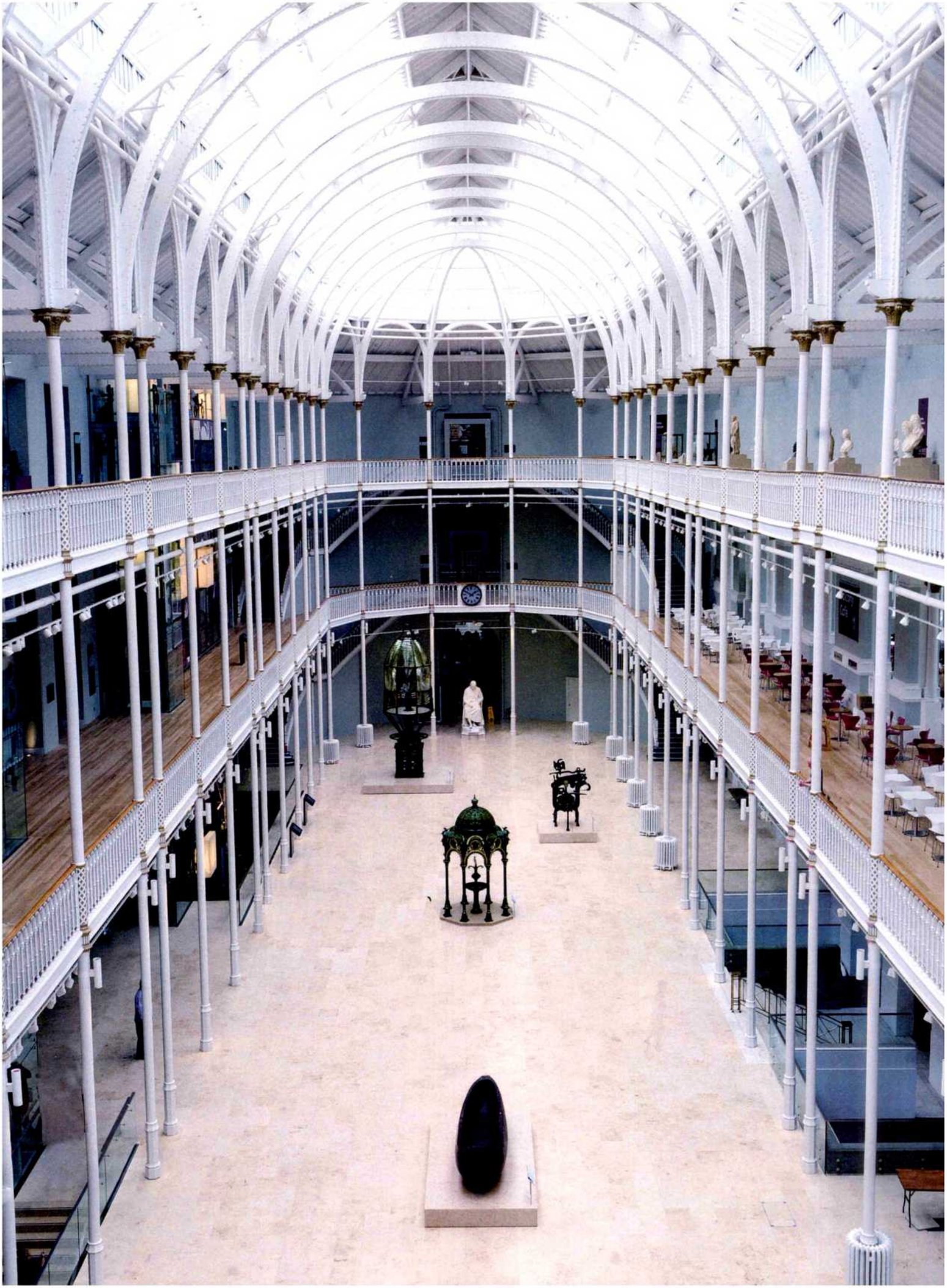
In any museum there is a conflict between the architecture and the artefacts. If the building is too showy, the collections are diminished. The architectural team, headed by self-described local lad Gareth Hoskins, has served the museum well. The new street-level entrances bypass the old steep flight of steps and provide access into what was once a warren of storage facilities, now transformed into a vaulted space providing visitor facilities, a shop and brasserie.



From this theatrically dark space, the visitor moves into the four-storey-high giant Victorian bird cage that is the Grand Gallery. It was modelled on the Crystal Palace and is full of light. The clutter has been cleared and vistas opened up so that all the galleries leading off the main space are visible.

The most striking installation is Window on the World, a construction of display cases that rises from the ground floor to the roof. The 800-plus objects spectacularly illustrate the diversity of the collections. A medieval knight's helmet sits adjacent to a girder salvaged from the wreckage of the Tay Bridge; a four-seater "tandem"; a statue of Buddha; tiny glass sculptures of slugs; a Charles Rennie Mackintosh lamp; and a working model of Stephenson's Rocket are among the artefacts that intrigue visitors and draw them to the galleries above. This is highly desirable, as only 10% of visitors ever ventured upstairs in the old Royal Museum.

What of the now uncluttered floor space? Museum designer Ralph Appelbaum says that this is now "a social convening space mixed with knowledge". Translated, this means that museum has a large performance area – the ▶



Left: an Assyrian stone relief from the palace walls of King Ashurnasirpal II. Below: Ching-Ching, the giant panda presented to London Zoo by Chairman Mao, died in 1985; her taxidermied body is in the National Museum of Scotland

Edinburgh Festival performances of the Rajasthan Dancers will take place there. And its ability to hold 500-seat banquets might provide a useful source of future funding. On a more proletarian catering note, a family of 10 were ensconced on the plinth of the Nubian god Arensnuphis enjoying a mighty picnic under the friendly gaze of the god and museum attendants. Just imagine if they tried that in the Great Court in the British Museum.

The new Discoveries gallery is the key to understanding the museum. Here, visitors are introduced to the four themes of art and design, the natural world, science and discovery, and world cultures, especially the contribution of "Great Scots", including David Livingstone, James Bruce, Alexander Fleming, John Logie Baird, James Watt, Joseph Black, Jackie Stewart and Dolly the Sheep.

I visited the museum shortly after it had opened. It was humming with visitors. This part of the museum has been closed for three years and locals were keen to see "their museum" again, especially as 80% of the objects on display had not been exhibited before. The other factors were the school holidays, the festival and the torrential rain, hence the world's largest collection of dripping pushchairs. The staff were coping with cheerful efficiency. There was a general buzz of delight and loud conversations.

This museum is clearly not one that inspires whispers. I suspect that visiting patterns will change in the next few months, but for now, encouraged by the free map, folk were engaged in a speedy treasure hunt, ticking off the Maori canoe, before dashing off to the T. rex skeleton via the Lewis chess pieces, Ching-Ching the giant panda, Egyptian mummies, the F1 racing car, and Bonnie Prince Charlie's knives and forks.

"For the moment," commented one benign attendant, "it's all gallop and gawp, but on future visits folk will stop to think, consider and make connections." One can but hope so, for the intelligence and research that has gone into galleries such as those devoted to World Cultures deserves respect. The 150 interactive exhibits were still working, despite constant use. I was amused to note in the Imagine gallery, designed for the under-eights, that the buttons were being monopolised by enthralled parents.

I was pleased and invigorated by all I saw and envious of the skill of those who created it. Only in one gallery, the Wildlife Panorama, have the designers' ideas lurched into eccentricity, perhaps even wantonness. "Can whales, hippopotamuses and porpoises really fly, Daddy?" asked one six year-old, gazing upwards.

There is so much to admire. The project, unlike the Scottish Parliament and Edinburgh tram system, was delivered on time and under budget. I am sure the redevelopment of a further 11 galleries by 2020 will be achieved with the same style.

As I came away from the museum, I shared one of the elegant glass lifts with an equally elegant local lady, well Pringled and tweeded. I expressed admiration for the renaissance in Scottish museums – so many millions made available this year alone for the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Ayrshire, the Riverside Museum in Glasgow, the National Museum of Scotland and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh.

"You see.... we Scots really value our culture," she said. "We are proud to be opening museums, while in England, I hear, you are closing libraries."

The National Museum of Scotland development cost £46.4m

Peter Lewis is a writer and former director of Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum

Unimpeded flow

"There's one problem," a local woman informed me: "Everyone's bumping into each other." Which is hardly surprising in the new National Museum of Scotland, where gravity-defying objects now scale the walls and hang in mid-air.

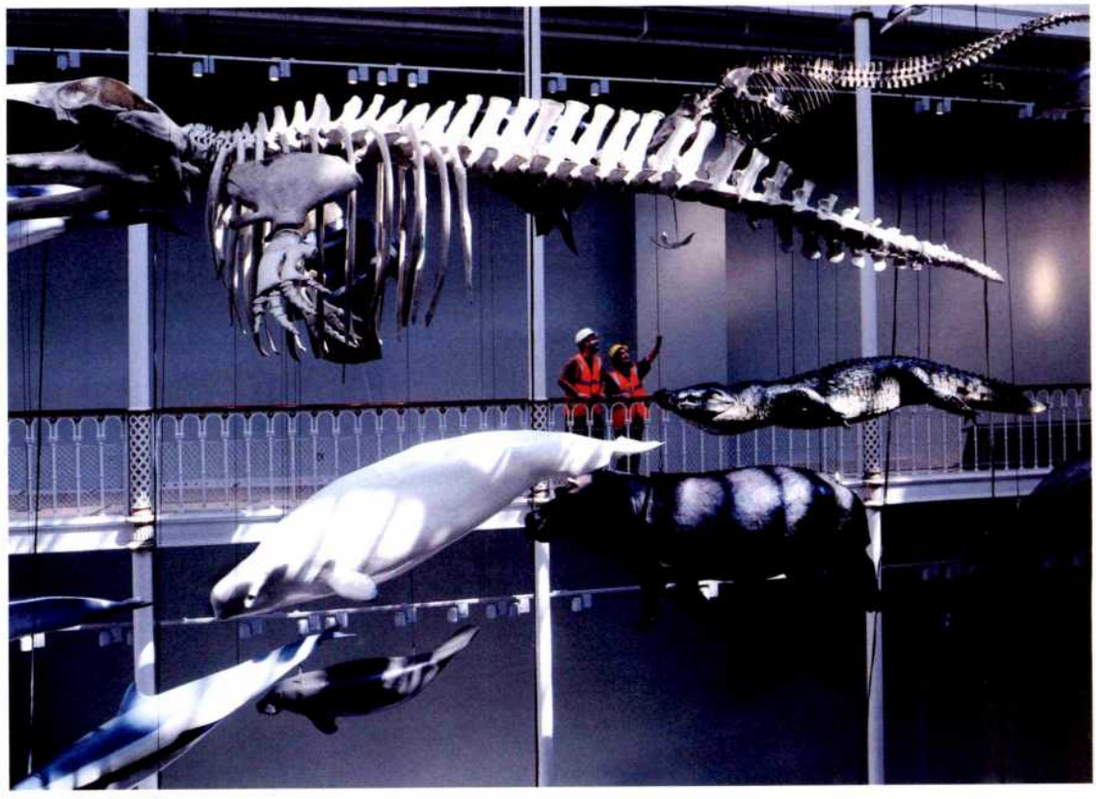
The curiosity of visitors is awakened the moment they enter the atmospheric entrance hall and notice objects rising through the ceiling. This Window on the World – a high-density wall display of taxonomically-arranged objects – is provocative for another reason: there are no text labels. Risky, perhaps, but it works as it makes us look at the objects with fresh eyes. People find their own meanings and connections and are prompted to use the touchscreens that interpret the objects and occasionally suggest visits to other galleries.

Touchscreens containing text, audio, film, graphics and images abound in the museum. They are well-designed and easy to use. Their content also shows how the museum places people at the heart of things by devices such as comparing our size on a graph with a whale on display, asking for our votes on cloning, or computing our green credentials.

Users of the Window on the World touchscreens can navigate through all 800-plus objects. On the downside, the quality of certain images was poor, there were no opportunities to zoom in or view objects from different positions, and there was an absence of accession numbers and acquisition details.

Access to displays is enhanced by the new technology. Physical access seems improved, too. There are no doors between galleries, and visitors can flow freely. And even though the galleries seem regimented by themes (natural world, world cultures, and science and technology, and so on), this new context enables cross-disciplinary ideas to flow, too.

Each gallery presents a sub-theme (such as Living Lands within World Cultures), which encourages more imaginative uses of objects to tell related stories. For example, where previously butterflies were presented in an entomological context, insects such as the luminous goliath birdwing butterfly now rub shoulders with the peregrine falcon to illustrate animal movement in air.



Elsewhere, the mesmerising Rolling Ball Clock of 1804 is given new meaning surrounded by meteorites and twinkling graphics in the Earth in Space gallery. And a Skidoo (snowmobile), although a product of Science and Technology, has more power in World Cultures presented in front of a vast snowscape graphic telling the Dene people's story.

NMS has recognised the importance of creating a multitude of spaces within the museum for learning, socialising and relaxing. The Discoveries gallery, which features standalone displays of Charles Darwin artefacts and David Stevenson lighthouse optics, provides access to Imagine, a colourful space for younger visitors and their families to explore, make noise, play, and tell stories aided by object displays. Despite the proximity, Discoveries feels tranquil and contemplative.

Interpretation across the museum works best when it emphasises analogies with everyday human experience or generates a sense of social interaction. Highlights include an e-label describing a sabre-toothed animal's teeth as being a "can-opener for giant armadillo shells"; a manual interactive that reveals a drinking straw and nutcracker to demonstrate how anteaters and walruses eat; and a display of cooking pots that release aromas when their lids are lifted.

One interactive made for my most sociable experience – a four-player ICT game featuring a projection (unfortunately out of focus) of the world onto a circular tabletop. The aim is to select two revolving symbols connected by some cultural significance. As I played, a rowdy crew of 16-24 year-olds jumped in, waving their hands in the projection beam. Eventually one of them asked me how to play and I suggested: "Select an object, read the person's story, and find a match." He found one, heard the fanfare, and exclaimed, "ya dancer".

As they left with a spring in their step, I felt compelled to look again at the objects, and a sense of connection between the world cultures now echoed throughout the gallery. The success of the new NMS is that these immersive environments establish relationships that can be understood by everyone.

Neil Johnson-Symington is a transport and technology curator at Glasgow Museums

Project data

Cost £46.4m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £17.8m; Scottish Government £16m; private sources £12.6m
Architect Gareth Hoskins Architects
Exhibition design Ralph Appelbaum Associates
Gallery fit-out Beck Group
Main contractor Balfour Beatty

Above: aerial animals form part of the wildlife panorama in the Natural World gallery.
Below: a scaly-throated earthcreeper features in the Discoveries gallery's Charles Darwin exhibit

Sammy Ofer Wing, National Maritime Museum, London

Shipping magnate Sammy Ofer donated millions of pounds to create an extension at the National Maritime Museum. *Julia Edge* takes a look

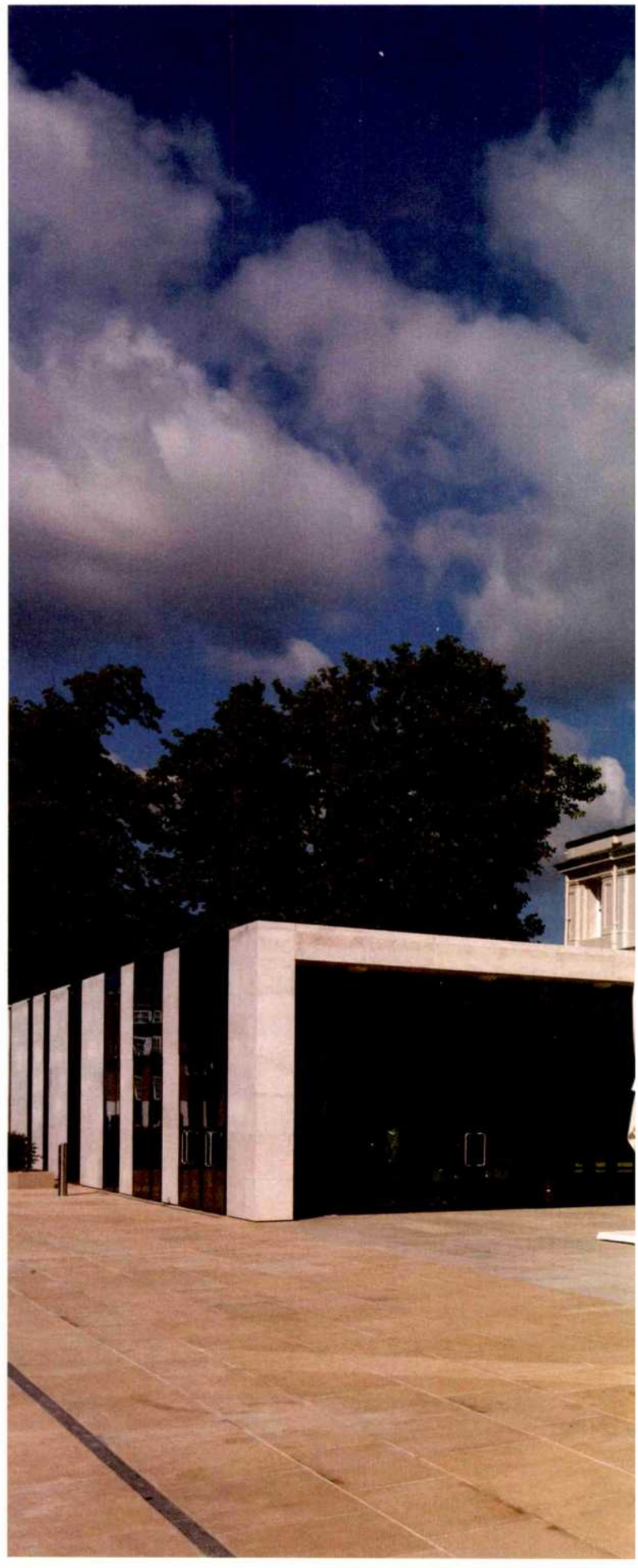
Approaching the National Maritime Museum (NMM) from Greenwich Park, the Sammy Ofer Wing creates an impressive entrance, the gleaming modern lines of the new building contrasting with the older facades. With a nod to the museum's subject matter, a narrow stream flows parallel to the building and marine plants grace the borders.

The wing, which opened in July, was largely funded by shipping magnate Sammy Ofer, who died in June. The extension comprises the Voyagers: Britons and the Sea gallery; the Compass Lounge, where visitors can discover the museum's collections electronically; a cafe and brasserie; a library; and a large temporary exhibition space.

Voyagers is designed as an introduction to the museum's collections. The first exhibit is a 25-metre long "wave" structure with images and words projected onto it. The videos include films, images of objects and archive material, and maritime related words that ebb and flow across the structure, mimicking a real wave. While the wave and its soundtrack do create a feeling of the sea and of the museum's collections, I am unconvinced that this is the best use of the space. The structure takes up at least half of the gallery and is less effective than the 30-metre object wall at the back of the space.

Artefacts on the object wall are grouped according to emotion rather than chronologically. This immediately makes the display more personal. Each object has a story, and is associated with a named person. Using emotions in this way helps to engage people; we realise that museum objects represent human stories.

The text with each item is concise and easy to understand. Many of the visitors I observed did not read from one end to ►



The modern lines of the Sammy Ofer wing contrast with the older exterior of the National Maritime Museum, London

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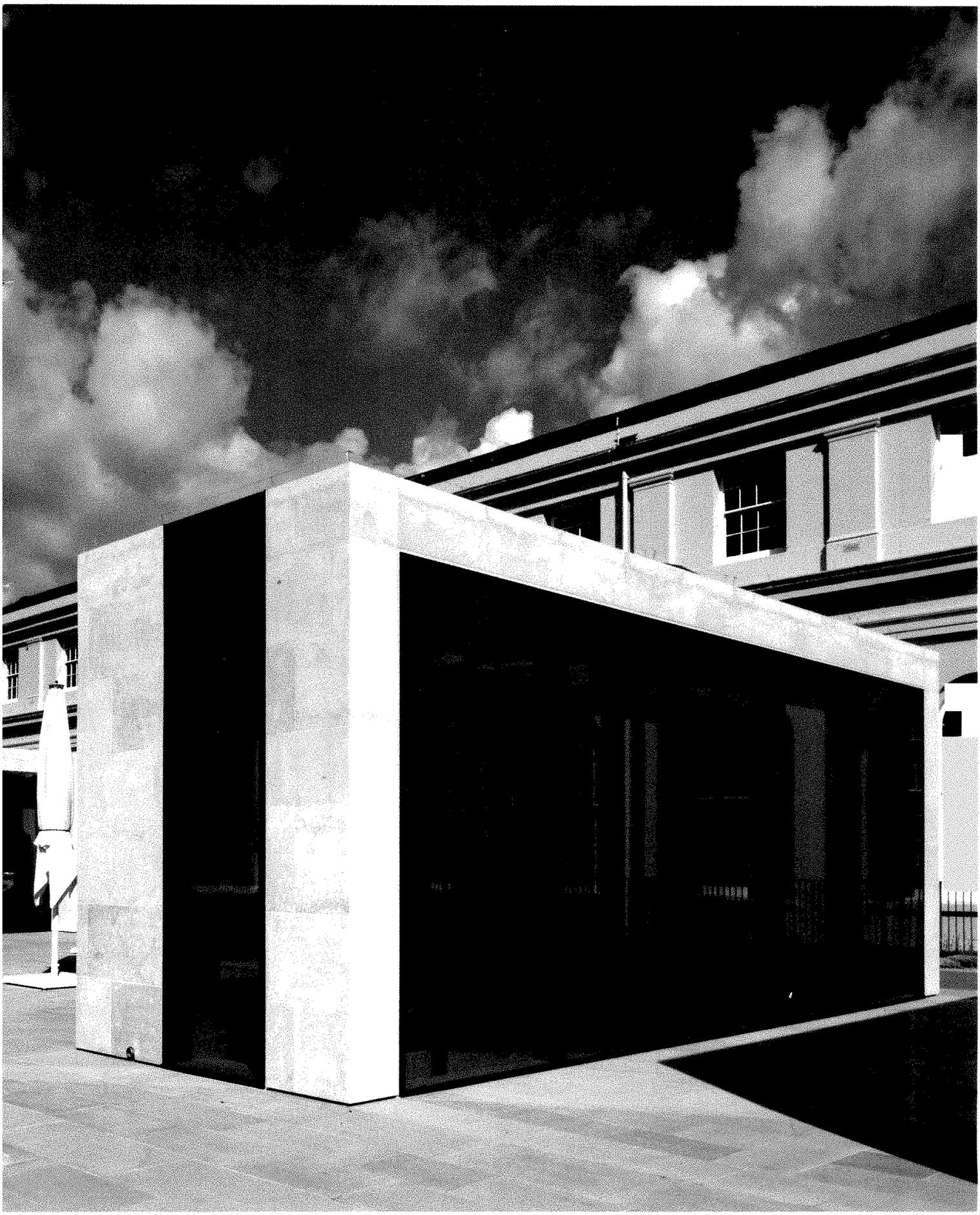

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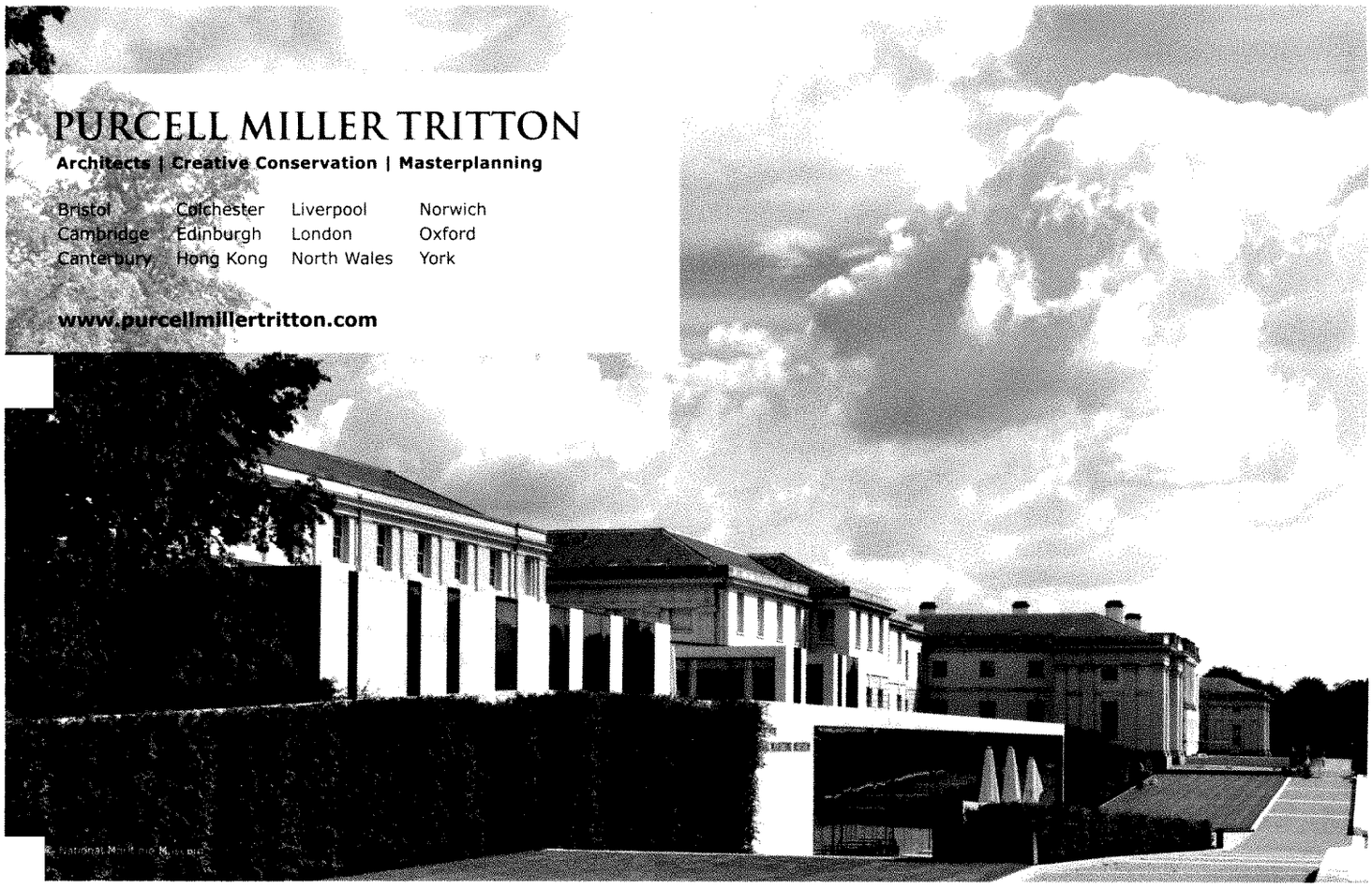

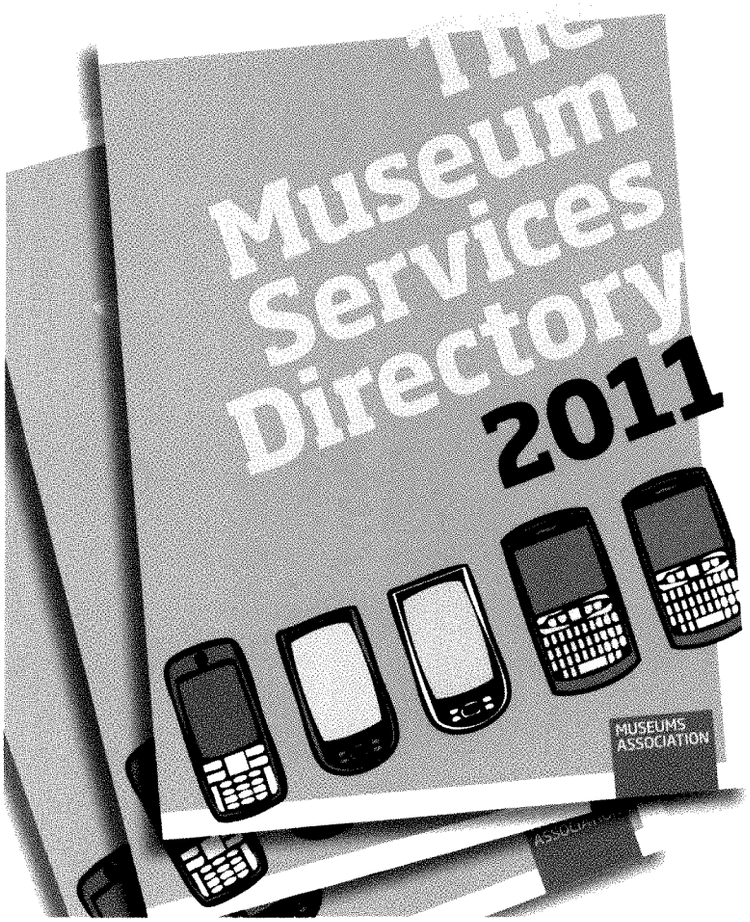

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the other but stopped and grazed at various points. The case layout and the distinct text allow for this. The section headings (love, anticipation, etc) are not a dominant feature of the case and missing them does not result in disorientation. Each object has enough of an explanation to put it in time and place and to be understood individually.

I enjoyed the display, and was both moved and intrigued by certain objects and stories. But I was frustrated by the lack of signposting to other displays in the museum. Where can we look to learn more?

A series of videos called What Does the Sea Mean to You? are set into pillars at various heights so that visitors can watch them as they leave the gallery. These show a range of people talking about their experiences of the sea. I found these engaging, but would have liked to have known who these people are.

The Compass Lounge encourages visitors to engage with the archives electronically. At the back of the area, five screens set on a curved wall form a "horizon", showing images of objects from the museum's collections. There is no imposed interpretation as these images are organised by texture and intensity of colour, rather than by object type or chronology. In practice, the objects still appear in groups (flags tend to be together as do ship models so on) although within these groupings are smaller ones.

Visitors can view rolling images from a distance, or can navigate around them using a tracker ball. It's a bit like flicking through a book. Find an image that interests you and you can bring it to the front, enlarging it. This is meant to "encourage users to think differently about the connections between objects" and it works well. It is also a good introduction to the breadth of the museum's collections and is more effective than the wave in Voyagers.

A "Plan-chest" on one side of the lounge has drawers that open to reveal large digital touchscreens that show the most popular objects from the collections website. Visitors can enlarge images and access extra information. I enjoyed using these, although it took time to master the skill of selecting and enlarging. I persevered, but some visitors were put off when things didn't immediately work. If the usability is improved, these touchscreens will be a good way of encouraging people to explore the collections.

A text panel explains accession numbers and how to use them in the collections website to look for more information about an object. It is a mistake not to have a computer terminal in the Compass Lounge to access the website, although there is free wi-fi access for people with laptops and smartphones.

Each visitor to the museum is given a compass card and, from a select number of objects, can choose to "collect" items that interest them by stamping their card in a card reader. Back in the Compass Lounge, you can insert the card into a pod to access more information about the object. You can also take the card home with you and enter a number onto the museum website to obtain the same information. Many visitors used these enthusiastically, particularly those with children.

The museum is planning to add more objects to the scheme as new galleries are opened. I would also like to see it develop by increasing the connections to related material, and in the number of stories. Again, it would be useful to be able to continue searching for connections online.

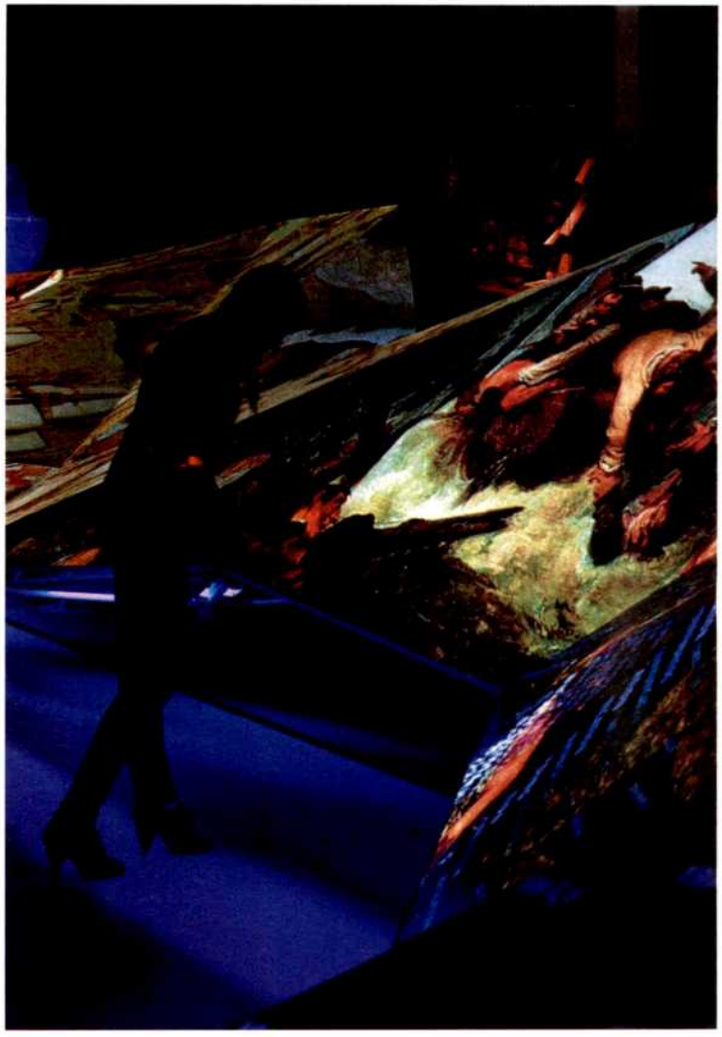
A large part of the new wing holds a cafe and brasserie. There is also a state-of-the art library and archive bringing together many items previously stored off-site. The basement of the new wing houses a temporary exhibition gallery.

Although the new wing is impressive and access to electronic information is good, I was disappointed not to see more objects on display, particularly in the Voyagers gallery.

Julia Edge is a former collections manager at the Horniman Museum, London, and a volunteer at Storrington and District Museum, West Sussex

Project data

Cost £35m
Main funders Sammy Ofer £20m; Heritage Lottery Fund £5m
Client representative and project manager Malcolm Reading Consultants
Concept design architect CF Møller
Executive architect Purcell Miller Tritton
Cost consultant Turner & Townsend
Main contractor Lend Lease
Interior designer Softroom
Archaeological consultant MoLAS
Access consultant David Bonnett Associates
Signage and wayfinding Clear
Digital signage designer The Plant
Archive racking Rackline
Voyagers display installation The Hub
Voyagers gallery designer Real Studios
Voyagers wave designer Light Surgeons
Compass Lounge designer Kin



Top: inside the Voyagers gallery at the National Maritime Museum. Above: a view through the new Sammy Ofer wing

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Fort Nelson, Hampshire

While the big guns are on target, *Jonathan Conlin* feels better interpretation could widen the appeal of Fort Nelson

Top: the Victorian entrance to Fort Nelson's 19-acre site. Far right: second world war arms in the Voice of Guns gallery. Right: the furies gun in the Art of Artillery gallery

The two "superguns" did it for me. One was a five-metre long, 15th-century Ottoman bombard (siege cannon), the other a prototype for the Iraqi supergun, sitting opposite each other in a temporary tented gallery.

Such bombards played a crucial role in the Ottoman empire's capture of Constantinople in 1453. Gerald Bull's supergun narrowly missed playing an equally dramatic role in the first gulf war. Separated by more than five centuries, these two pieces bookend the Royal Armouries' impressive collection of artillery displayed in this Victorian defensive redoubt above the Hampshire coast. As examples of a certain, perhaps regrettable, variety of human ingenuity, they pushed the boundaries of what was technically possible in the period in which they were made.

Both weapons were invested with considerable significance. Their fearsome reputations were such that they did not need to be fired to have an impact. They kept secrets that were only partly understood by those who operated them. Whether this power was reflected in tabloid exposés of arms to Iraq or the script of a prayer cast in the bronze of the bombard itself, it is clear that there is much more going on here than engineering. In the early days of artillery, those who founded and operated such weapons were popularly endowed with disturbing, almost divine, powers to create objects that had a life, and often a name, of their own.

Like humans, bombards, sakers, coehorns and similar types of weapons were fickle – fully capable of blowing up in your face, even if treated with respect. Many of the early Portuguese and Spanish cannon on display at Fort Nelson were cast complete with small images of the Virgin Mary, or with the name of the saint after which they were named.

Fort Nelson is one of a network of fortresses erected in the 1860s when prime minister Palmerston and many others feared a French invasion. Seven forts and redoubts were built on Portsdown Hill on the Hampshire coast.

Although some of the others are open for special events, Fort Nelson is the only one fully accessible to the public, and the only one to hold regular firing displays. It was intended to protect the strategically important port of Portsmouth from inland attack in the event that the French succeeded in landing elsewhere and marched on the port. The collapse of the French Second Empire in the Franco-Prussian War eliminated the French threat. Indeed, Napoleon III and his wife Empress Eugénie were forced to seek asylum in Hampshire, where they remain to this day, entombed at Farnborough.

Fort routine

Fort Nelson never saw action, therefore, and was redundant within decades. In the 20th century it fell into disrepair. It was restored by Hampshire County Council in the early 1990s and became a branch of the Royal Armouries in 1995.

At present, its displays do a poor job of explaining when it was built (1869), and how it relates to the surrounding landscape and its sister forts. The fort is built into the top of the hill, and its deliberately low profile has the odd effect of making it hard to appreciate how well-positioned it is. There is only one opportunity to climb up onto the wind-swept ramparts and admire the view.

There is more to see underground as the whole fort is bisected by a deep tunnel that leads from the barracks through the powder magazine and on to the mortar gallery and a caponier. This is a feature that permitted the fort's garrison to survey and fire into the main defensive ditch. Near the entrance, visitors can visit the Redan, a complex of buildings which housed the officers' mess, hospital, kitchens and sleeping accommodation.

A kitchen and a set of sleeping quarters were open during my visit, the latter thoughtfully furnished with Victorian uniforms and personal effects, accompanied by an audio of a typical garrison soldier's letter describing fort routine. This room gives a flavour of what must have been a monotonous life, with little but the occasional drill (usually performed without any actual firing, or even gunpowder) to mark the days by.

There are plans to open up more of the Redan and a ▶

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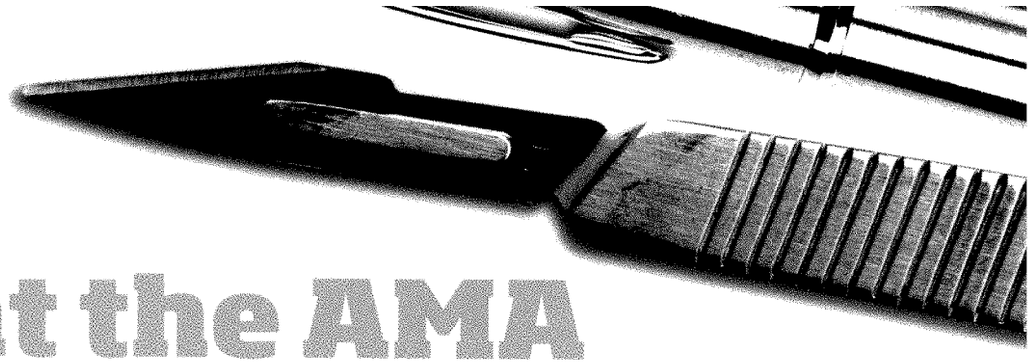

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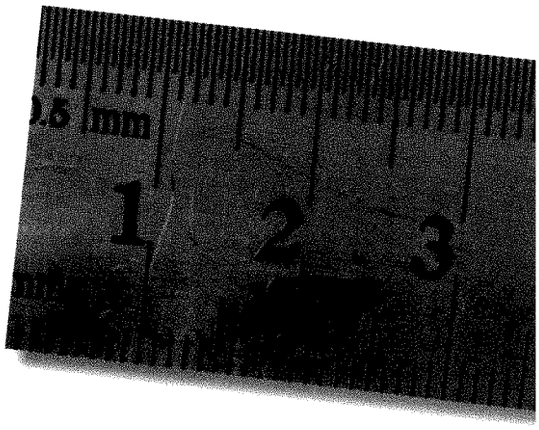

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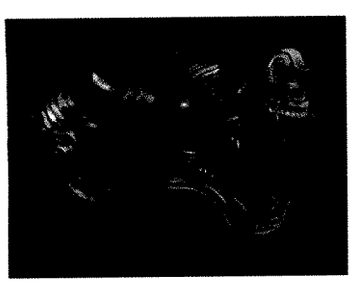
visitors' centre is under construction outside. Presumably the latter will feature a proper model and other displays explaining the fort's origins, construction and purpose.

The fort itself is of considerable interest, but the Royal Armouries' collections are the main attraction. To some extent the fort and the collections overlap, as some of the armament on display was deployed there. But the collections include siege, field, mountain, anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery from an equally wide range of armed forces: primarily British, but also French, Italian, German, Chinese, Indian and Russian.



Top: a Turkish bombard and a section of the Iraqi supergun in the Voice of Guns gallery. Left: an ornate Burmese cannon in the Art of Artillery gallery at Fort Nelson

Project data

Cost £3.5m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £2.26m; Royal Armouries capital budget £500,000; Garfield Weston Foundation; Department for Culture, Media and Sport/ Wolfson Galleries Improvement Fund; Foyle Foundation; John Ellerman Foundation; J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust
Main contractor Mansell
Project manager Greenwood Projects

For those interested in military history, the collection and the labels mounted next to the pieces have much to offer. Apart from a display on the evolution of rifling between 1869 and 1880, there were none of those poorly formatted, dense labels that can be seen in many military museums, and visitors are not bombarded with information.

Off the mark

Fort Nelson brands itself as the branch of the Royal Armouries dedicated to artillery. It is clearly going to be a draw for military history buffs, and the curators can perhaps be excused for pitching the museum at their level. But basic terms such as muzzle, breech and rifling are not explained, and a visitor ignorant of their meaning would struggle to make sense of much of the commentary without them. As a son of a British army officer, I was well-schooled in this argot, though I confess I was defeated by the discussion of rifling.

For those visitors who escaped national service, "the Woolwich groove" will be more redolent of dubstep music than a method of rifling a cannon. And the What is Artillery? gallery fails to answer the question it poses. Ordinary visitors would surely appreciate something more by way of an introduction.

Funding delays and other difficulties mean that the displays are still not as the curators would wish. But with a bit more imagination, it should be possible to connect all visitors with these extraordinary objects: not only as specimens of this or that "class" or "mark" of weapon, but as one-offs with a fascinating provenance.

Some of the pieces on display at Fort Nelson didn't have just one life, they had several: forged, fired, captured, re-bored, turned on their makers, taken as booty, collected and displayed in a variety of contexts. They all have mouths, but these cannon need a bit more help to tell their stories.

Jonathan Conlin teaches history at the University of Southampton

Teignmouth & Shaldon Museum, Devon

Good design, curation and storytelling are behind the successful redevelopment of this Devon museum, writes *Penny Ritchie Calder*

If you were asked to name a seaside resort in Devon, Teignmouth may not be the first to spring to mind. But this modest town has a rich history, which has been revealed in an impressive makeover of the Teignmouth & Shaldon Museum.

The old museum was housed in an 18th-century building a few blocks back from the seafront. The building was rundown and the collections were starting to suffer. The curator and the local historical society, who first explored the idea of refurbishment and expansion some 10 years ago, certainly had vision. Now, an area of ground to one side of the museum accommodates a gleaming-white extension.

The front facade faces the main ringroad and station, creating a new landmark for the town. Linking the old building to the new is a spiral staircase, expressed externally in the abstract form of a lighthouse. On the top floor, above a multi-purpose space for museum and community events, is an open-air seating area with views over the rooftops towards the sea.

Approaching the museum, visitors get their first inkling of the event-filled history of the area. It's explained that Teignmouth has the dubious honour of being the last place in England to be raided by a foreign power. In 1690 1,000 French troops came ashore, burning and looting as they went. Cannon balls wedged into the museum's outside wall are captioned Banksy-style with a stencilled extract from the townspeople's appeal to the king for funds to rebuild their homes.

Turning the corner, the airy entrance hall is large enough to accommodate a restored Victorian bathing machine, reflecting Teignmouth's heyday as a fashionable holiday destination. Visitors can walk through it and try on bathing gear while listening to the sounds of the sea.

Hornblower inspiration

An introductory map and timeline chart the area's fortunes since its early days as a 14th-century port and shipbuilding centre. The two exhibition galleries in the old building are then accessed seamlessly from the new extension. They are divided by ▶

Left and right: Devon's Teignmouth & Shaldon Museum has been refurbished and expanded and now covers the area's maritime, leisure and social history

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theme: maritime history in the Sea gallery and town history in the Shore gallery, one floor up.

The centrepiece of the Sea gallery is the extraordinary story of how in 1975 a local schoolboy discovered a 16th-century shipwreck while diving off the beach. First thought to be an Elizabethan warship, research now indicates that it was a Venetian merchantman. Many finds from the wreck are on show, including an ornate bronze gun and a copper cooking pot containing animal bones, possibly the remains of the last meal cooked on board.

Another local boy's story featured is that of Admiral Sir Edward Pellew, the inspiration for CS Forester's Hornblower character, who joined the Royal Navy at the age of 13. A flag from his successful bombardment of Algiers in 1816 hangs in the gallery, alongside a large portrait in oil.

The Shore gallery chronicles the history of the town. Displays show how tourism was given an extra boost when the railway reached the area in 1846. Thanks to the work of civil engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, passengers still enjoy a dramatic journey along the edge of the coast within yards of the sea.

Flip cards reveal that for an impressive number of notable people, Teignmouth was indeed the place to come. JMW Turner and Beatrix Potter both visited to sketch, and Jane Austen was said to have courted a sailor during her stay in 1802. Charles Babbage, the "father of the computer", had his family home here. The poet John Keats took lodgings in 1818, but seems to have been less than enamoured with Devon as a whole, which he described as a "splashy, rainy, misty, snowy, foggy, haily, floody, slipshod county".

Axe heroes, past and present

Other exhibits tell of more recent visitors. The Royal Hotel's register records the night in 1967 when the Beatles stayed while filming their Magical Mystery Tour. A guitar hanging on a wall was lent following a triumphant return to their home town by Muse, a rock band formed by three Teignmouth college friends.

Many objects are on open display, revealing an encouraging trust in the visitors but also giving a welcoming feel to the place. Other items are protected in simple Perspex cases. They range from a bronze axehead dating from 2000BC, dug up by local workmen, to a roll of bathing cabin tickets with an enemy bullet still lodged in it from a wartime German air raid on the town.

The eclectic mix of objects could easily become a visual jumble, but deft exhibition design has brought them under control. Backgrounds are uniformly white, with the galleries differentiated by use of colour on the floors. A low-level plinth shelf round the walls supports showcases, objects and interactive elements, as well as providing seating. Crisp graphics panels contain well-written information enlivened by quotations. Object captions are clear and legible.

The colours used throughout match the museum's new logo and branding. They are inspired by local geography: blue for the sea, ochre for sand, and a muted red reflecting the sandstone cliffs of the area. There are other good touches, too, including an imaginative solution to the problem of where and how to credit donors. Small stainless steel discs engraved with individual names and messages are fixed at intervals under the spiral staircase handrail, forming a decorative, but effective means of saying "thank you".

The project was largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's Sea Change programme. The overall cost was a surprisingly low £1.1m, showing that such schemes are not always about huge budgets. Thoughtfully-considered external and internal design, a sound curatorial hand and good storytelling are all more important.

Teignmouth & Shaldon Museum has also managed to create natural, uncontrived links between past and present through objects, film footage and oral history. These draw in casual visitors but, equally importantly, give the town's present generation a sense that they are part of a continuing thread of history.

Penny Ritchie Calder is a museum consultant

Above and below: Teignmouth & Shaldon Museum has taken an imaginative approach to its themes

Project data

Cost £1.1m (£70,000 on exhibition design and production)
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £370,000; Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, Sea Change £370,000; Foyle Foundation; Ugbrooke Environmental; English Heritage; Big Lottery Fund; Headley Trust
Architect Harrison Sutton Partnership
Project management Ian Blackwell
Build ROK; Enelco
Exhibition design Lyndsay Design
Fit out Bell Interior Solutions

© IAN JACKSON (ALL PHOTOGRAPHY)

Books

Marketing and Public Relations for Museums, Galleries, Cultural and Heritage Attractions

Case studies are at the heart of a book that provides wide-ranging guidance for marketing professionals in the cultural sector, writes *Emma Parsons*

Marketing and public relations are changing rapidly. Communicating with the public should no longer just be a one-way affair – the emphasis now is on engagement and dialogue, involving our audiences in our work in the broadest sense.

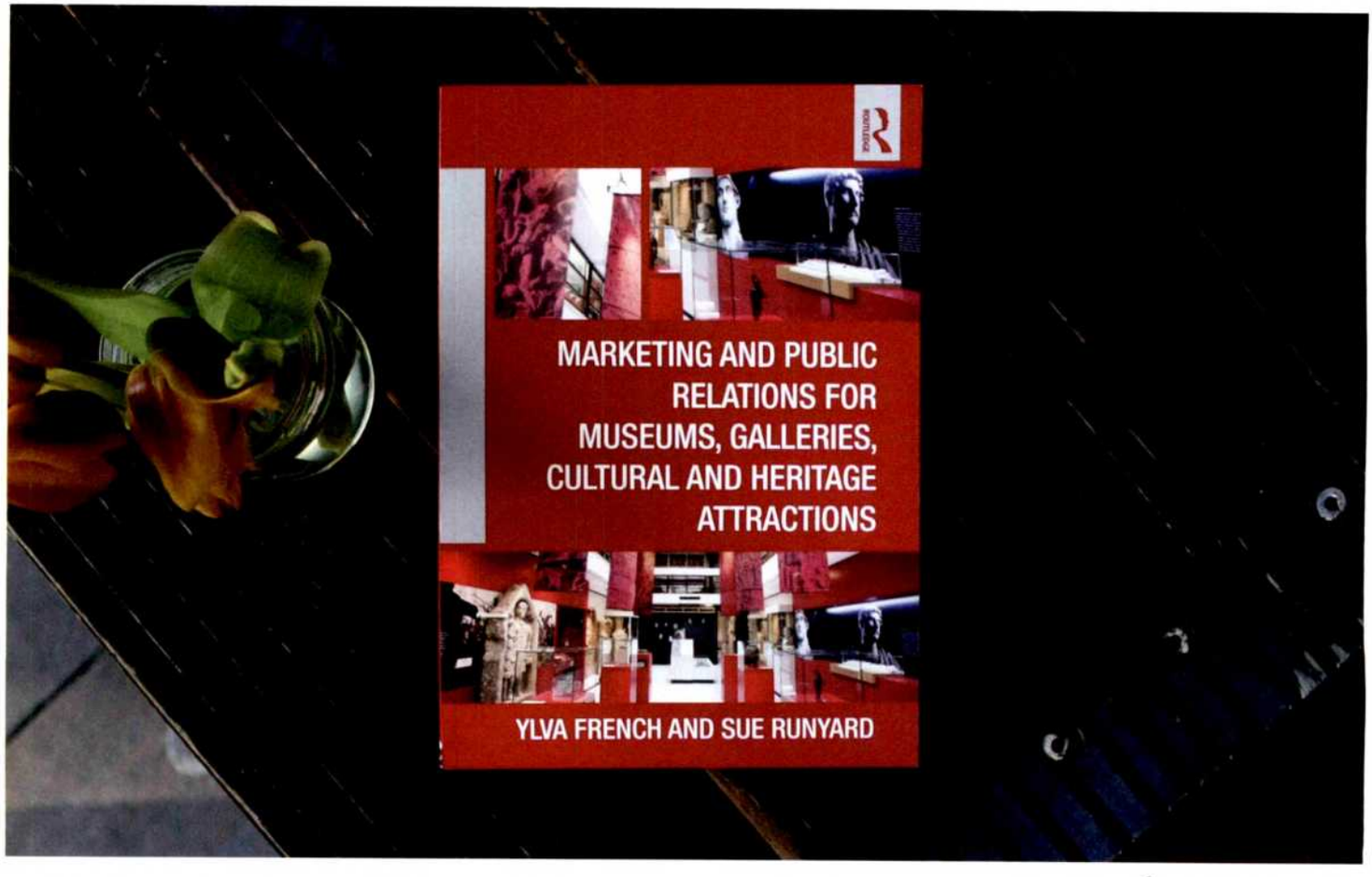
The communication channels available to us are multiplying almost daily and there has never been more need for marketing professionals to update their skills and knowledge regularly to keep up with the opportunities to engage with new and existing audiences. This book makes the case that the discipline is now fundamental to the sector, and no longer a "bolt-on".

Given this fast pace of change, it's ambitious to attempt to provide a handbook for students and practitioners to use that will have a decent shelf life. But Ylva French and Sue Runyard have a wealth of knowledge and the breadth of quotes and case studies from others in the sector is impressive.

The case studies – and there are more than 30 – range from the Manchester Museums Consortium's Creative Tourist website, Banksy at Bristol, the brand developed for the Great North Museum, the fundraising campaign for the Staffordshire Hoard, through to smaller venues such as the Lake District's Muncaster Castle and its events programme, and the PR campaign following the earthquake that rocked the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch, New Zealand. They make fascinating reading and I only wish that there were contact details for all the contributors as I'd love to find out more about some of the projects.

The book begins with the theory and then moves onto tactical delivery. The case for taking some time away from day-to-day delivery is made. Marketing and communications teams need to be good planners, but should also have creativity and risk-taking in their make-up; this calls for being outward-facing, talking to others and understanding the opportunities for new ideas. To take some risks they need the trust of their managers and to have proved that their work has a positive impact on the organisation.

The need to gather evidence of



this impact, to evaluate and monitor, is perhaps one area that could be stronger in the book. An interesting point is made about the tendency to delay action in the face of our ever-increasing access to information. A paralysis of data can settle in. We need to remember how to use our gut instinct, backed up of course by experience and knowledge, and appropriate levels of data and insight into our audience.

It's great to read this while the context it has been written in is still current. The book does refer to cuts to services and the new digital environment, which is reflected in declining newspaper sales, the need to develop mobile-friendly websites, the expansion of social media, and changes in the way that the media gathers stories.

But inevitably it can't be completely up-to-date. The transition of museum functions from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to Arts Council England is not covered in the otherwise excellent discussion on stakeholders and advocacy. Also, the mention of MySpace seems rather outdated.

The authors return repeatedly to the need for all our organisations to make their communications authentic, to use integrity and to deliver on their promises. It's a disaster to over-promise on what the visitor will experience. The chapters on PR and crisis management are particularly good on the importance of PR responsibility.

The book is useful for anyone working in this area, or aspiring to do so. It makes points about the need to have influence internally, the importance of stakeholders and visitors, and how to balance planning and delivery with an eye to the new opportunities that are constantly evolving.

The layout and style of the publication's writing make it an easy read, and its wealth of resources and case studies are an excellent reason to keep on dipping in and making a return visit to the bookshelves.

By Ylva French and Sue Runyard, Routledge, £29.99, 978-0415610469

Emma Parsons is a freelance arts and heritage marketing and management consultant

On my bookshelf

Louise West

Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen

A visit to a country house and a guided tour of the rooms provides a turning point in this, the most famous of Jane Austen novels. The owner, the haughty Mr Darcy, has excellent taste it seems, cares for the environment and is a benevolent master.

Elizabeth Bennet, the heroine of the book, behaves like a typical museum visitor. There "were many good paintings; but Elizabeth knew nothing of the art... and... turned to look at some drawings of Miss Darcy's... whose subjects were usually more interesting, and also more intelligible."

Like many of us, she is drawn to, and draws meanings from, the familiar and easy to grasp. One hopes that in time she will move on to the good stuff!

Pride and Prejudice has been on my bookshelf, read and re-read, since I was 15 years old. Now I work in the house where the novel received its final revisions and from where it was published.

It is justifiably a classic for all the well-known reasons. But Austen's insights, as shown above, are often surprising and relevant to a modern readership, and each re-reading reveals further, previously unrealised, treasures.

It is what makes it such an honour and a privilege to be curator of the house museum that was once her home and the place in which her literary talent came to fruition.

Louise West is the curator at Jane Austen's House Museum in Chawton, Hampshire. The 17th-century house tells the story of Austen and her family

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Museum Practice online

published on the 15th monthly at www.museumsassociation.org/mp

Coming up in the next online issues of MP:

October: Exhibition Labels

The October issue of Museum Practice looks at exhibition labels. Writing coach Rebecca Mileham offers her top tips for writing labels that visitors actually want to read and, as more museums explore different approaches to interpretation, Rebecca Atkinson looks at how QR codes and digital labels are being used across a number of different institutions. Kirsty Devine and Richard Williams describe the script-writing process for interpretation at Glasgow's Riverside Museum. There are also case studies from the Museum of Croydon and the National Trust, as well as a selection of case studies submitted by Museum Practice readers.

November: Oral History

The November issue of Museum Practice explores how museums and galleries are using oral history. Articles include an in-depth look at funding for projects, digital storytelling and how oral history can be used online and in galleries. There will also be an exploration of digitisation, as well as a selection of case studies illustrating how museums and galleries are approaching oral history in practice.

MP

All MA members and subscribers to MP get access to MP online. Log in online now at www.museumsassociation.org/mp to view MP. If you are not registered on the site, it only takes a few minutes, and you will then have access to MP and much more.

Profile Elsa Davidson: long-distance curator

Elsa Davidson is the curator of the South Georgia Museum in the South Atlantic Ocean, and spends half the year on the remote island in the sub-Antarctic seas and the other six months working for the Edinburgh-based South Georgia Heritage Trust.

What's your commute to work like?
Quite epic: it's an 18-hour flight from Oxford to the Falklands and then a very uncomfortable six-day trip by fisheries patrol vessel to the island itself. Supplies can take between three weeks and six months to reach us.

Would any city museum type be up to the job?
You have to be able to compromise and work really well with people, make do with what you've got and make your own entertainment on a regular basis. I got used to that growing up in the Orkneys. In the summer months, there can be up to 25 people here, but in winter it's 11 or 12 who are British Antarctic Survey personnel, the museum team, government officers and visiting scientists and yachting folk.

What's your social life like?
We have movie nights and there's lots of fancy dress. Over the years, people have brought things out to the island and we've built up a collection but the costumes tend to entail boiler suits and boots. It's a bit like the Village People after a while. We have up to 8,000 visitors during the open months including a lot of tourists on cruise ships. Sometimes we're invited on board for a trip to the Antarctic Peninsula when we give presentations and are treated to fine wines and fantastic food.

A one-way trip to work takes Elsa Davidson seven days

What's the museum like?
It's housed in the old whaling station manager's villa and looks at the whaling and sealing industries as well as the natural history. We have a taxidermist who flies down to the island for a few weeks each year to prepare new specimens. A couple of years ago, he prepared a wandering albatross. We're doing an oral history scheme with the ex-whaling community to reinstate a history that has, to a certain extent, been swept under the carpet by political and environmental concerns. On top of that, there's a programme which includes a rat eradication project. They arrived on the whaling ships and have been killing indigenous species ever since.

Any downsides?
Keeping on top of museum developments can be tricky. I cram a lot of training into the months I'm back in the UK. I miss the excitement of temporary exhibitions – when people come here, it tends to be a once-in-a-lifetime visit so we don't bother much with rolling exhibition programmes. On the other hand, there aren't many other places where you can share the morning walk to work with gentoo penguins.

Moves

Stephen Hopper will leave Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in autumn 2012 to return to Australia as the new chair in biodiversity at the University of Western Australia.

Sally Tallant, head of programmes at the Serpentine Gallery, London, has become the artistic director and chief executive of the 2012 Liverpool Biennial.

Elvira Dyangani Ose has been named as Tate Modern's curator for international art. The post is a partnership between the gallery and the Guaranty Trust Bank.

Melanie Kidd has joined the New Art Exchange, Nottingham, as its director of programmes. She had been the head of exhibitions at the National Centre for Craft & Design, Sleaford.

The new director of external affairs at the National Museum of Science and Industry is **Roger Highfield**. He was the editor of New Scientist magazine.

Historian **Andrew Baines** has been appointed as curator of HMS Victory by the National Museum of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Jim Forrester, director of the Imperial War Museum North, will retire in March 2012 after 10 years at the museum.

Appointments at the Abbotsford Trust, Melrose: **Sandra McNeil** becomes the first learning and engagement officer; and **Samantha Hobrough** becomes fundraising officer.

Stephen Hopper

Sally Tallant

Artist **Peter Blake** has been named as the first patron of the John Moores Painting Prize.

Michelle Ogundehin and **Bob Stefanowski** are reappointed as trustees at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. **Paul Ruddock** is reappointed as chairman of the museum.

John Holman, professor of chemistry at York University, has joined the board of the Natural History Museum, London.

Creative England's (CE) first chief executive is **Caroline Norbury**. She was acting as interim establishment director at CE.

Paul Latham, chief operating officer at Live Nation, is to chair the combined Creative & Cultural Skills and the National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural.

Who got the job?

Property manager, Hugh Miller Birthplace Cottage and Museum, Inverness
Salary: £20,6002-£21,002
Advertised: MJ, December 2010

Alix Powers-Jones
What does the job entail? Staffing the reception desk, selecting shop stock, collection care; writing lesson plans and papers, PR and strategic planning. Fabulous!
Most memorable experience in the job so far? Walking down the street a few days after the local primary school had visited to be greeted by calls of "Hi, Doc!" by some very small children.
Other jobs director, Highlanders' Museum, Fort George, Inverness.
Qualifications BSc archaeological science; MA, PhD environmental archaeology

© REG KEW (HOPPER) © MARK MCNULTY (TALLANT)

Museums Journal Jobs and Tenders

Museums Journal
24 Calvin Street London E1 6NW
Telephone 020 7426 6930
Facsimile 020 7426 6962
Rates £65 scc
Web www.museumsassociation.org
Recruitment Sales Emma Mitchinson
Email adverts@museumsassociation.org

Invitation to tender

Management of Geevor Tin Mine

Cornwall Council is tendering for an operator of Geevor Tin Mine, an internationally significant industrial heritage site and a 'Gateway Site' in Cornwall's Mining World Heritage Site.

Information about Geevor Tin Mine together with the scope, length, estimated value and details of the proposed contract can be found at www.tendersincornwall.co.uk from 7 November 2011.

Suppliers' open meeting will be on 28 November 2011 with deadline for submission of pre-qualification questionnaires being 6 February 2012.

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CORNWALL COUNCIL

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Assistant Director (Collections)

£61,393pa (plus benefits)

With the forthcoming retirement of Dr Peter Boyden in early 2012, we are seeking a new Assistant Director of Collections at the UK National Army Museum in London.

The National Army Museum holds the premiere collection of material relating to the British Army and tells the story of the British Army at home and abroad from earliest times to the Present day. With facilities at Chelsea and Sandhurst, the Museum is currently in the process of moving its collections to a modern storage facility north of London, to be completed by spring 2012.

The Museum is also planning a major re-development of the Chelsea site involving the complete re-presentation of the Museum displays, facilities and storage, to ensure the Museum sits at the forefront of military museums in the 21st century.

We are seeking someone who is passionately interested in telling the story of the British Army to as wide an audience as possible. The successful candidate will be an acknowledged expert in the subject with a track record of publication through all media including print, web and academic conference, but who is equally passionate in sharing that information with members of the public, schoolchildren and army recruits.

With a department of 20 you will be capable of managing staff and projects; of championing high standards of collections care, mentoring curators in their subject areas and of supporting colleagues in regimental museums in their work. You will be keen to promote the Museum to sponsors and on working with colleagues in museums and academic departments in the UK and abroad.

The ideal candidate will hold a museum qualification, have a comprehensive knowledge of British Army history, display sound management skills and will be able to demonstrate a track record of communication in their subject area. If this sounds like you then we would like to hear from you.

For further information and an application form:
http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/aboutUs/vacancies/

Closing date: Friday 18 November 2011.
Interviews: Tuesday 6 December 2011.

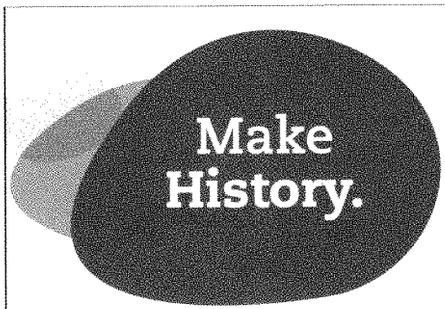
Museums Journal

MJ jobs offers recruiters a platform to reach the right museum and gallery professionals.

For further information on our readership and circulation details please email adverts@museumsassociation.org

To subscribe to the **Museums Journal** or **Museum Practice** please email pamela@museumsassociation.org

www.museumsassociation.org



Director of Birmingham Museums Trust

£75,000 - £90,000 Birmingham

The creation of the Birmingham Museums Trust is the most significant cultural development in this region of the UK in over 20 years. This is a rare opportunity to shape a new organisation, and we're looking for a heavyweight in this sector with the vision, knowledge and experience to take a strategic lead on this exciting transformation.

For more information visit
www.museumsassociation.org/careers/find-a-job

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Museums Journal **Jobs**

Full details of the jobs below are found on the Museums Association website www.museumsassociation.org/jobs

Jobs currently online

Contractors - Invitation to Tender	Lowther Castle & Gardens Trust	North West	Closing date 3rd Nov
World War II - Project Manager	New Forest National Park Authority	South West	Closing date 3rd Nov
World War II Education and Outreach Officer	New Forest National Park Authority	South West	Closing date 3rd Nov
Curator	Jewish Military Museum	London	Closing date 4th Nov
Head of Arts	National Glass Centre	North	Closing date 6th Nov
Curator	Leeds Castle	South East	Closing date 12th Nov

To download our media pack with more details about recruitment advertising go to www.museumsassociation.org/advertise or phone Emma Mitchinson on 020 7426 6941.

Advertise your temporary and volunteer posts for free

Museums Journal and the Museums Association website offer tailored, professional recruitment advertising that will ensure you fill your vacancies quickly and cost-effectively. They are simply the best places to advertise jobs for the museum and gallery sector.

Temporary jobs

Advertise fixed-term contract jobs for free!
(including maternity cover and internships)
The package includes a one-line advert in Museums Journal with a full listing on the MA website.

Volunteers

Advertise volunteer posts for free!
The package includes a magazine listing and full details on the MA website.

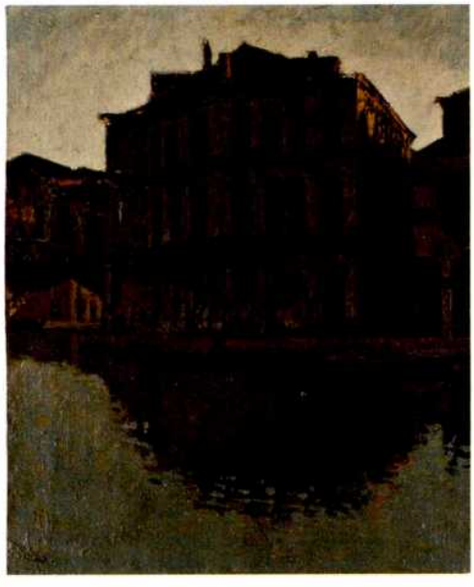
To place a listing or to find out more please phone Emma Mitchinson on 020 7426 6941 or email adverts@museumsassociation.org

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Wanted: Information on 19th-century artist Charles Marchand, also known as Karl Kaufmann, C Carlo, F Gilbert, Henri Carnier

A set of Edward Ardizzone's illustrations for The Little Train has been acquired by Seven Stories, Newcastle upon Tyne

Walter Sickert's Venice scene, The Rialto Bridge and the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, has a new home at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales



Find an object

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loan throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● The British Postal Museum & Archive, London, has 200 items that have been highlighted for disposal from its textiles and **postal uniform** collection. These include a jackets and coats, waistcoats, trousers and other items ranging from good to poor condition. Items are offered free of charge to Registered/Accredited museums. Full details are available on request. Recipient to collect.
Contact: Emma Harper
email: emma.harper@postalheritage.org.uk

● Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth, wishes to transfer the bulk of the Margaret and Tom Evans Bequest (**Aberystwyth Yesterday**), a collection of over 5,000 items (mostly women's 20th-century costume and accessories) to interested parties. The collection is not of national importance, but has a wide range of typical examples of late 19th- and early 20th-century items. Details on request.
Contact: Michael Freeman
tel: 01970 633087
email: museum@ceredigion.gov.uk

● Craven Museum & Gallery, Skipton, offers for loan all pieces of artwork from the **Clement Roebuck** art collection, which includes works by Jacob Pierneef, Walter Sickert, Maurice Utrillo and Christopher Wood. Images can be viewed at: *www.cravenmuseum.org/gallery/art-roebuck-collection*
Contact: Amy Ball
tel: 01756 706317
email: aball@cravendc.gov.uk

● The Rural Life Centre, Farnham, Surrey, seeks a home for a long run of the magazine **Antique Collecting** (1978-1987). A few issues of Model Cars (1947-8) and similar magazines are available. Free if collected.
Contact: Alexa Barrow
email: alexa@rural-life.org.uk

● The National Museum of Science & Industry wishes to dispose of **various objects** from the National Railway Museum, York, and the National Media Museum, Bradford. Detailed listings on request. Arrangements may be made to view the material.
Contact: Helen Thornton
email: Helen.Thornton@nmsi.ac.uk

● The West Berkshire Museum, Newbury, offers the following to any interested museum: an unopened packet of German Kodak plan-filme; four vintage Christmas cards; a **1939 map of Belgium** and Luxembourg produced by Texaco; and 61 issues of The Table and Housekeepers' Journal. Photos on request. Recipient museum to arrange transport.
Contact: Jennifer Allison
tel: 01635 519 562
email: jallison@westberks.gov.uk

● IWM has started a five-year review of its collections. It has reviewed the collections of **vehicles and aero-engines** and is considering the disposal of up to 25 vehicles and 12 engines. It is now starting a period of consultation on these items, which are offered as gifts. It welcomes expressions of interest from appropriate museums and will be communicating with relevant stakeholders. Any disposals proposed at the end of the consultation process will be offered on the basis that potential recipients organise and pay for collection. A list of the items is available.
Contact: Emily Dodd
tel: 0207 416 5252
email: edodd@iwm.org.uk

Wanted

● Information is requested on 19th-century artist **Charles Marchand**, also known as Karl Kaufmann, C Carlo, F Gilbert, Henri Carnier. The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth, has a 19th-century painting titled King William Street, Adelaide by the artist and seeks details about him.
Contact: Michael Ward email: michael.ward@nda.ox.ac.uk

Acquisitions

● Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales has acquired The Rialto Bridge and the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, a painting by **Walter Sickert**, thanks to a funding grant of £35,000 from the Art Fund and a contribution from the Derek Williams Trust. The new painting, which cost £70,000 after tax concessions.

● Seven Stories, the museum of children's books in Newcastle upon Tyne, has acquired a complete set of watercolour illustrations by **Edward Ardizzone** for The Little Train, one of only four picture books for children written by Graham. The purchase was made possible by grants from the Art Fund, the V&A/MLA Purchase Grant Fund, and the Friends of the National Libraries.

● The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, has bought Harry Hill's oil painting of a successful **racehorse** owned by its founder, John Bowes, a successful horsebreeder and race-goer. The painting, Mr John Bowes' Daniel O'Rourke with Frank Butler Up, depicts the horse with jockey Butler on board. The painting was recently bought at auction by the museum for £18,000, with the support of the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Art Fund, the national fundraising charity for works of art; and the Friends of the Bowes Museum.

Wen, by Jasper Clarke, is one of five portraits shortlisted for the Taylor Wessing prize at the National Portrait Gallery, London

Harry Hill's equestrian portrait of a horse owned by the Bowes Museum founder has been acquired by the museum

● The Art Fund has helped Perth Museum and Art Gallery to buy a vase by prominent British ceramicist Kate Malone. A **Very Large Fennel Vase** was bought for £5,400, of which the Art Fund contributed £1,700. This acquisition was also made possible through funding from the National Fund for Acquisitions, and by a grant of £1,000 by Perth Decorative and Fine Arts Society.

Funding

● Arts Council England has awarded a lottery grant of almost £99,000 to the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust for a major London 2012 Cultural Olympiad digital art commission. The grant enables the trust to commission artist **Kurt Hentschläger** to create a new digital artwork entitled CORE. The lead curator is Richard Castelli, director of French-based creative consortium Epidemic. This work will form part of the London 2012 Festival, generating new audiences in the West Midlands and leaving an important legacy for the region. It will be a premiered at Enginuity during March 2012, one of the 10 Ironbridge Gorge Museums.

Awards

● British Design Awards 2011: the **Hepworth Wakefield** has won the Best Architectural Achievement; the Yorkshire Sculpture Park shop was shortlisted in the Best Retailer category.
www.thebritishdesignawards.com

● Czech artist Jan Mikulka has won the Visitor's Choice Award at this year's **BP Portrait Award** at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Miluka's painting is a close-up of his friend Jakub Wagner. This year, a record 28,532 votes were cast between 16 June and 4 September.

● Five UK museums paired with five artists have been shortlisted for the £60,000 prize in the Contemporary Art Society (CAS) Annual Awards. The award aims to support museums to commission new work through a donation of £60,000

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 02074266940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Mentor Refresher
2 November 2011, London
A workshop for existing mentors of the Associate of the Museums Association (AMA) to receive an update on any developments in the scheme and a chance to share information.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Introduction to mentoring
2 November 2011, London
A workshop for anyone who wants to mentor for the AMA. The session provides a guide through all stages of the process.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Getting the most out of the AMA
23 November 2011, Edinburgh
A workshop for anyone undertaking, or thinking of undertaking, AMA. The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. The afternoon session will explore updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants can come for the day or the afternoon.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Mentor Refresher
24 November 2011, Edinburgh
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to receive an update on

The Imperial War Museum, which opened a Don McCullin show last month, has rebranded

by the Sfumato Foundation to the winning museum, that, once completed will remain with the museum. The five are: **National Museum Wales**, Cardiff, with Artes Mundi and artist Andrea Büttner; **Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery** with Christina Mackie; **Shipley Art Gallery** with artist Matthew Darbyshire; the **Walker Art Gallery**, National Museums Liverpool with artist Wael Shawky; and the **University of Warwick Art Collection** with artist Katie Paterson. The winner will be announced on 14 November.

● Jasper Clarke, David Knight, Dona Schwartz, Jooney Woodward and Jill Wooster have been shortlisted for the £12,000 **Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize**, the international photography award, held at the National Portrait Gallery, London. The winner will be announced this month.

● Jeremy Uden, senior conservator at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, has been awarded the **Clothworkers' Foundation** conservation fellowship of £80,000.

The Hepworth Wakefield has won Best Architectural Achievement in the British Design Awards 2011

● London-based artist film-makers Anja Kirschner and David Panos have won the 2011 Film London **Jarman Award** of £10,000 and a Channel 4 short film commission, for new strand Random Acts.

● Nominations are now open for the £25,000 **John Moores Painting Prize** 2012. Judges for this year's competition are artists Fiona Banner, Angela de la Cruz and George Shaw; Iwona Blazwick, the director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; and creative director of the BBC, Alan Yentob. The prize is an open submission competition available to all UK-based artists working with paint. The deadline for artists to enter is 20 January 2012. Winners will be announced on 13 September 2012. Online registration can be found at *www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/johnmoores*

● **Turner Contemporary**, Margate, which opened in April, has won the Best Use of Arts and Culture in regeneration at The Regeneration & Renewal Awards 2011.

● Wins for the **Yorkshire Sculpture Park**, which is near Wakefield, in the county's Most Magnificent Attraction poll following public voting; and at the Business Tourism Award at the Yorkshire White Rose awards.

Web news

● **Europeana**, the digital library, museum and archive, has opened a new interactive video space, Europeana Remix, with a short film on a first world war friendship between two soldiers, one German, the other British. It uses the latest HTML5 and Popcorn.js technology. *http://remix.europeana.eu*

● The new **Thomas Chippendale** interactive website, a resource aimed at primary schoolchildren to teach them about the work of the famous furniture designer, is now live. Its development was been jointly funded by the Chippendale Society, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Leeds Art Collections Fund, the Friends of Nostell Priory, Harewood House Trust, Burton Constable Foundation and Temple Newsam House. *www.chippendaleactivities.org*

Miscellaneous

● The Imperial War Museum (IWM) has launched its new brand, Imperial War Museums. The brand was developed following a review of the **IWM brand** in order to increase its presence in the marketplace.

● The University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art is changing its name to **ESCALA** – Essex Collection of Art from Latin America.

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developments in the scheme and a chance to share information.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Introduction to mentoring
24 November 2011, Edinburgh
A workshop for anyone who wants to mentor for the AMA. The session provides a guide through all stages of the process.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

London members' meeting
5 December 2011, British Museum, London
The latest in the MA's series of free members' meetings, which are designed to keep members informed and give them more input in the policies and direction of the association. Held at the British Museum, this event runs from 10am-4pm and is open to all MA members living and working in London. It is free of charge for all Individual, Institutional and Corporate Members to attend.
For more information, visit www.museumsassociation.org/events

The British Museum is the venue for next month's London members' meeting

Getting the most out of the AMA
7 December 2011, London
See 23 November (above) for full details.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Museums Association Conference & Exhibition 2012
8-9 November 2012, Edinburgh
The most important event in the museum and heritage calendar and a must-attend for everyone working in the sector. The conference brings together a range of professionals to debate the latest thinking and discover new ideas and products. Full programme and booking details will be available in May 2012.
www.museumsassociation.org/conference

Rolodex calendar dates, 1954, Epstein Archive, New Art Gallery Walsall

Neil Lebeter

"There's an incredibly poignant story behind these seemingly ordinary fragments of paper, which come from the archive of sculptor Jacob Epstein and the Garman family. The documents had been sitting largely unattended and uncatalogued in our basement for years before Bob and Roberta Smith arrived as an artist-in-residence to make sense of it all and to give it a new permanent home on display.

I found them in a file that had been discarded as worthless by previous researchers. Having read the story of the family, however, it didn't take long to decipher what they were. Kathleen Garman – Epstein's second wife – had saved them because they were the dates on which two of their children, Theodore and Esther, died in the same year.

The nature of the deaths was very shocking and Kathleen visited their graves – a trip from London to the south coast – every Saturday for the rest of her life. We discovered the books of poetry she wrote on those long visits and the story simply became darker and darker.

For the last nine years of his life, Theo had what we now term schizophrenia although he didn't receive proper treatment. He was very close to Esther who, at 25, was four years his junior.

It seems that a family meal had been arranged after which Theo was to be committed. When the ambulance turned up, he went into a rage, a struggle ensued and he died from a heart attack. Esther saw it all and that started a chain of events that ultimately led to her taking her own life.

Shortly before a trip to Italy that summer, Esther turned down a proposal of marriage from a friend. On her return to London, she committed suicide.

This tale is at the centre of the new Epstein Archive Gallery Bob has created. Bob was very interested in how Epstein's obsession to make art led to the destruction of a lot of his private life. He was a distant father, to say the least.

The gallery has been funded by the Museums Association's Effective Collections programme, which gave us the opportunity to commission Bob to create a massive artwork with paintings on the walls and hanging signs, all in response to what was in the archive.

Neil Lebeter is archive curator at the New Art Gallery Walsall. Bob and Roberta Smith's Epstein Archive Gallery is now open to the public

The original New Ways of Curating project ended in March and there had been a real concern that the work would simply stop.

It has been a great privilege to go through all the Epstein material. We've had to tread a very careful line, as the stories of Theo and Esther are very delicate. We didn't want to be disrespectful.

Bob and I came at it from different angles. He became very emotionally involved while I was the dispassionate voice, a difficult route to take as a curator."

Interview by John Holt

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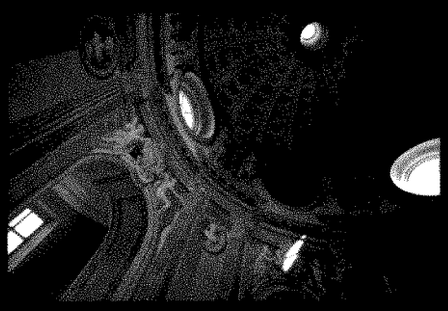
Museums Journal

Let there be light Do art galleries need more interpretation?



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Baroness Andrews on protecting heritage

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Military review
Army museums hit by MOD cutbacks

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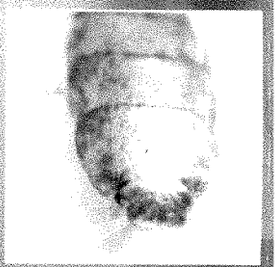

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Design Esterson Associates
Printed by Wyndeham Roche Limited
Subscription rates £105 UK; £160 overseas
Contributors Val Bott, Maurice Davies, Katie Downey, Louise Gray, Gareth Harris, Felicity Heywood, John Holt, Geraldine Kendall, Maev Kennedy, Peter Lewis, Anne Millman, Gary Noakes, Nick Poole, Judi Richards, Sara Selwood, Carole Strachan, Rachel Souhami, Mark Suggitt, Mick Waters, Jane Weeks

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Editorial 020 7426 6920
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Museums Journal is published by the Museums Association (reg charity no 313024) and is editorially independent. Nothing should be taken to be the view of the MA unless stated. Museums Journal strives to avoid inaccuracies: if readers have a query or complaint they should contact the editor. Anyone who would like to contribute an article to Museums Journal is asked to first contact the editor.
ISSN 0-027-416-X

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Editorial

The case for cultural education is clear

Last month, the Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) published ImagineNation: The Case for Cultural Learning, which includes evidence of the benefits of cultural education and argues the case for investment.

The report comes against the backdrop of increasing concern about the future of cultural education. There are worries that the National Curriculum Review in England will sideline arts subjects and that the English Baccalaureate will focus schools on more "mainstream" subjects such as maths, English and science.

There has also been a reduction in the number of places available for teacher training in arts and cultural subjects at secondary level, and a 27% drop in Ucas applications to art schools.

On top of this, the added danger of funding cuts is that some museums might see education programmes as disposable "extras", compared to looking after buildings and collections

The need for cultural learning is not just subject specific. Of course, any society needs cultural creators and teachers, but the point of a broad and rich cultural education is that it makes for better all-round students who are engaged with an extensive range of subjects and interests.

'The point of a broad and rich cultural education is that it makes for better all-round students who are engaged with an extensive range of interests'

The CLA's report includes several recommendations about how cultural learning might be embedded in schools, and also how its impact might be measured. It will be used, according to its authors, to bring together a strategy for cultural education.

Perhaps the publication of this report will force the government's hand. In April, culture minister Ed Vaizey commissioned the Henley Review of Cultural Education. Its belated publication is expected this month. Politicians from all parties appear to agree that cultural education is a good thing. If that's the case, government should publish the review and get on with implementing its findings.

● See comment, p16

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
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ACE concludes that its decision to support Public was 'poor judgement'

Council ignored own misgivings on funding

Rebecca Atkinson

An Arts Council England (ACE) assessment into how it funded the Public art centre in West Bromwich has concluded that it made "poor judgements" in financing the project despite "explicit misgivings".

An earlier report by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee criticised ACE's funding of the Public as a "gross waste of public money".

ACE gave £32m to the Public between 1996 and 2009

The ACE report, carried out by chartered accountant Anthony Blackstock, concluded that ACE ignored its own concerns about funding gaps and the leadership of developers.

"ACE agreed to fund a building that was not fit for purpose," it read. "It should have judged that this was the case and demanded a radical downscaling in 1999-2000."

ACE recently announced that it will give £200,000 a year to the Public from 2012 for its visual-arts programme.

Campaign to buy Titian suffers funding blow

Scottish government will not contribute towards the £50m price

Gareth Harris

The campaign by London's National Gallery and National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) to secure Titian's Diana and Callisto has suffered a blow following the announcement by the Scottish government that it will not contribute towards the purchase.

The institutions have until the end of 2012 to raise £50m for the painting, which is owned by the Duke of Sutherland.

"Over the coming year, the galleries will be exploring ways to achieve this, for example, in discussions and through approaches to grant-making trusts and individual supporters," said an NGS spokeswoman.

A Scottish government spokesman reportedly said that with a 57% cut to the culture portfolio capital budget over the next three years, no additional funds are available for major purchases.

In 2009, the NGS and National Gallery teamed up to buy the companion piece, Diana and Actaeon, for £50m.

The National Gallery and National Galleries of Scotland want to buy Diana and Callisto from the Duke of Sutherland

The NGS contributed £4.6m towards the acquisition with £12.5m provided by the National Gallery, £1m of which was grant-in-aid. The Scottish government pledged £12.5m, the National Heritage Memorial Fund donated £10m, the Art Fund gave £1m and the Monument Trust contributed £2m.

The Monument Trust and the Art Fund are in talks with the National Gallery about Diana and Callisto.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport said: "We have been in discussions with the National Gallery about how we can support the purchase of Diana and Callisto, but for the time being, those discussions remain confidential."

In 2009, questions were raised about the deal's terms, especially about assurances for the continued loan of the remaining 26 Bridgewater paintings owned by the duke, which have hung at the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh since 1945.

However, the NGS spokeswoman added that this arrangement would not be affected by the possible purchase of Diana and Callisto.

Army museums facing a shake-up in financing

Changes would save Ministry of Defence more than £0.5m a year

Patrick Steel

A review of army museums funded by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has recommended that 113 posts cease to be civil servant posts and instead be funded directly by the museums through grant-in-aid.

As part of the process, which would ultimately save the MOD more than £520,000 a year, only one full-time post would be funded for each regimental or corps museum. This would result in the loss of nine posts and further savings of £200,000. The review also said museums of disbanded regiments should receive funding for only 25 years after their dissolution, leading to a fall in MOD-funded museums from 69 to 36 over time.

Colin Sibun, director of the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, said: "The recommendations are sad but inevitable given the defence cuts; sad because antecedent regimental museums play a valuable role in representing the army in their locality. But when defence overall is reducing in every department, it is inevitable that museums are included."

A wooden toy depicting a drummer from the Battle of Waterloo

The MOD currently spends about £4.3m a year on regimental and corps museums, and £5.4m on the National Army Museum. Many regiments and corps contribute significant funding to their museums, while private donations account for £18m a year.

While accepting the report's claim that MOD funding is "critical" to support museum activities, some in the sector worry that its rationalisation could deter private donors in particular.

Mark Taylor, director of the Museums Association, said: "Regimental museums' present funding is variable, and there is a danger that this review, while giving a better sense of order to the existing structure, could also reduce help in kind that exists."

The report also calls for the National Army Museum, which receives 55% of the MOD's funding for army museums, to play a more proactive role in guiding and advising the army museum network on specialist issues.

Director Janice Murray said the museum's 2011 strategic plan had already committed it to the creation of a programme of travelling exhibitions and special loans to regimental museums.

Birmingham plans to put museums into trust model

Thinktank would be part of spring overhaul

Gareth Harris

Birmingham's museums are set for a radical overhaul with plans to merge the city's museum and art gallery and Thinktank science museum into a new trust from April next year.

The city council is seeking a director for the new Birmingham Museums Trust who, according to the job specification, will manage an annual budget of £11m.

The new trust will also encompass several historic buildings such as Aston Hall, Sarehole Mill and Weoley Castle.

Birmingham City Council wants to save an estimated £1.3m in 2011-12 and £2.4m by 2014-15 across its nine museum and heritage sites.

Meanwhile, under a plan initiated by the city's Ikon gallery, the Thinktank science museum would form part of a proposed creative quarter in the city, which will also house a new contemporary art museum, photography venue and Ikon 2 space.

The three new institutions would be located around Curzon Street station, with the scheme scheduled for completion by 2020.

Birmingham could benefit from a new creative quarter around Curzon Street station

Discussions have yet to take place concerning the role of the new trust in relation to the Creative City project.

A spokeswoman for the city council said it was hoped that one of the planned museums could house "one of the national collections".

"We can't go into specific detail about the national collection in question, but it contains works by artists and sculptors [such as] David Hockney, Antony Gormley, Henry Moore, Francis Bacon and Bridget Riley," said the spokeswoman.

In brief

New Liverpool galleries
The Museum of Liverpool, which opened in July, is to unveil four galleries this month: the Great Port, which charts the history of the city's docks; the History Detectives, which features a 38-metre travellers' timeline; the City Soldiers; and the Liverpool Overhead Railway. Meanwhile, the museum has been named as "one of the greenest museums on earth" in a CNN documentary.

Herbert in Shaw initiative

The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in Coventry is offering a new watercolour (above) by Turner Prize nominee George Shaw as a competition prize in a bid to "get Coventry creating". Entrants are required to create a work of art depicting a Coventry landscape. The gallery is hosting a free exhibition of Shaw's paintings until 11 March 2012 (see profile, p60).

Manchester's Irish centre
Work has begun on the Irish World Heritage Centre based in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester. The venue, scheduled to open by summer 2012, will house the Irish Diaspora Museum, which will tell the story of Irish emigration through a series of thematic displays. The new building is modelled on an ancient Irish ring fort.

Timespan unveils project
The Timespan Museum and Arts Centre in the Scottish Highlands is using social media to gather accounts of women's resistance during the Highland Clearances. The project marks the fact that 2013 is the 200th anniversary of the clearances in the Strath of Kildonan. Museum without Walls will use Facebook, Twitter, a new website and a smartphone app.

Open university: new gallery at Durham's Oriental Museum focuses on Chinese art

Ceramics dating from the Neolithic period to the present day feature in the collection of Chinese art and archaeology at a new gallery at Durham University's Oriental Museum. The creation of the Malcolm MacDonald Gallery, which occupies a floor of the museum, follows two years of re-evaluation of the collection by art historian Xiaoxin Li. Among the objects on display are models made for burial in ancient tombs, porcelain created for the Imperial Court, an iron horse and jade carvings.

Vindolanda breaks record

Places for volunteer dig snapped up in two hours

Gary Noakes

The Vindolanda Roman Fort archaeological volunteer programme has filled all 650 vacancies within two hours of applications opening.

The Vindolanda Trust's new website allocated places on the Hadrian's Wall dig on a first-come first-served basis.

The trust's director of excavations, Andrew Birley, said: "Last year, we were astounded when volunteer availability was more than 90% filled within 48 hours, but this year was a record-breaker."

The excavation attracted applications from as far afield as Canada and the US.

Volunteers spend at least a week at the site between April and September, living in on-site accommodation or locally.

Concern over schools' arts provision

Darren Henley's report into cultural education is delayed

Patrick Steel

Publication of the Henley review into cultural education was delayed last month, amidst growing concern about the impact of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) on arts education.

The EBacc, which was introduced in January, rewards secondary schools for good GCSE grades in maths, English, science, a language and either history or geography. This has led to many schools switching resources to these subjects, and cutting the option to study the arts.

Pauline Tambling, chief executive of Creative & Cultural Skills, said: "The Henley review needs to send out the right signals in terms of empowering teachers to engage pupils in cultural education."

Removing arts from the national curriculum could lead to schools axing museum visits

The report was expected to have been published in October.

Mark Taylor, director of the Museums Association, called for the review to be published immediately. "The effectiveness of a feasible initiative for cultural education is likely to be diminished with every month that goes by," he added.

A report by the Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) published earlier this year, ImagineNation, made the case for a "baseline of quality cultural learning opportunities" for every child and young person, and underlined the evidence for the educational and social outcomes that this would bring.

Lizzie Crump, coordinator for the CLA, said: "We hope that the Henley review will support the baseline, making the arts a strand in the EBacc and keeping the arts as a statutory part of the national curriculum."

She added that learning outside the classroom initiatives such as museum and gallery visits were a pivotal part of cultural learning, but removing the arts from the national curriculum would mean less incentive for schools to engage with this agenda.

A Department for Culture, Media and Sport spokesman said no date had been fixed for the review, but it would be published this year.

● See comment, p16

Sector worried by loss of natural history expertise

Warwickshire and Derby museums have made curators redundant

Gareth Harris

Concerns have been raised about the loss of curatorial expertise in the natural history field following a spate of redundancies in the past year.

Steven Falk was made redundant from his post of senior keeper of natural history at Warwickshire Museum in October.

In a letter to Museums Journal (see p20), Falk stressed that he was the "last surviving traditional keeper of natural history in the entire West Midlands", adding that "natural history collections in this region are now entirely within the hands of museum geologists, social historians and archaeologists".

But Mark Ryder, head of localities at Warwickshire County Council, defended the move, saying that the heritage and cultural services must make annual savings of £413,000 by March 2014.

He added that the museum's curatorial team was "being restructured to create a more integrated approach to collections management, interpretation and development, against a backdrop of reducing operational costs".

Derby Museum and Art Gallery made its keeper of natural sciences redundant in March

The new team will consist of a curator of natural sciences, a curator of human history and two part-time collections assistants.

Derby City Council made Nick Moyes, former keeper of natural sciences at Derby Museum and Art Gallery, redundant in March, following a spending squeeze.

Bill Grange, natural history keeper at the museum until 2006, criticised the move in a letter to the Derby Telegraph earlier this year. "I worry that the natural history collections, which need specialist knowledge for their care and documentation, will be at risk," he wrote.

In response, Roger Shelley, principal keeper at Derby Museum, said: "Resources have been realigned so that we have more staff working on collections care, including natural sciences."

Meanwhile, Museums Journal understands that the post of curator of natural science at Luton's Wardown Park Museum has been axed.

Elise Naish, collections manager at independent charitable trust Luton Culture, which runs the museum, said the curatorial team underwent a structural review this year in response to changes in funding.

"We no longer have a specific post solely looking after this collection [natural history]. It now falls within the remit of the local collections curator and assistant curator," said Naish.

She added that the museum had started to work with local natural history groups.

Museums urged to apply for digital project grants

ACE teams up with BBC for £2.5m initiative

Gary Noakes

Museums have been invited to apply for a share of the £2.5m in grants available from Arts Council England (ACE) for an experimental digital arts media and commissioning partnership with the BBC.

The Space, which will run from May until October 2012, aims to allow artists to engage with audiences via personal and tablet computers, mobile devices and connected TV. It will host content from new and established artists, as well as companies, and will include celebrity curation, plus live broadcasts and content from ACE and BBC archives. ACE chief executive Alan Davey said it would be a "communal playground".

There will be about 50 awards, of which most will be between £20,000-£60,000. Only exceptional cases will receive more than £100,000.

Expressions of interest must be made by 9 December.

ACE chief executive Alan Davey described The Space as a 'communal playground'

These will be screened and full applications invited from about 70. Successful applicants will be notified on 17 February.

Proposals are invited in three areas: the capture of a specific event or work; work to deepen knowledge and reflect the creative process; and the creation of a work using emerging technologies.

The spokeswoman said a museum submission might be an online exhibition of items not on permanent display.

The BBC is investing £2m in the project.

In brief

Museum development
Arts Council England has announced that it will extend the delivery mechanism and funding model for museum development until the end of July. More information on the application process for the delivery of museum development will be provided in early 2012. Museum services delivering development should take into account the cost of extending this work into 2012-13 in their negotiations for the major grants programme or transitional funding.

Galleries key to festival
Galleries will play a pivotal role in the London 2012 Festival. The Tate Modern extension will stage performance and event-based art, while the Turbine Hall will host a commission by Tino Sehgal. Tate Britain will house a collection of 2012 Olympic posters. Tracey Emin will present an exhibition, She Lay Down Deep Beneath the Sea, at Margate's Turner Contemporary.

Abbot Hall in schools link

The Lakeland Arts Trust is one of nine cultural venues chosen to participate in an initiative run by the Prince's Foundation for Children and the Arts. The project will involve pupils and teachers from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Ryelands Primary School in Lancaster visiting Abbot Hall Art Gallery (above) in Kendal regularly over the next year.

Leicester uni exhibition
Leicester University's School of Museum Studies is staging a collection of 28 portraits of disabled people from the Royal College of Physicians. Re-framing Disability includes portraits dating back to 1634, which are juxtaposed with contemporary photographs by Lynn Weddle.

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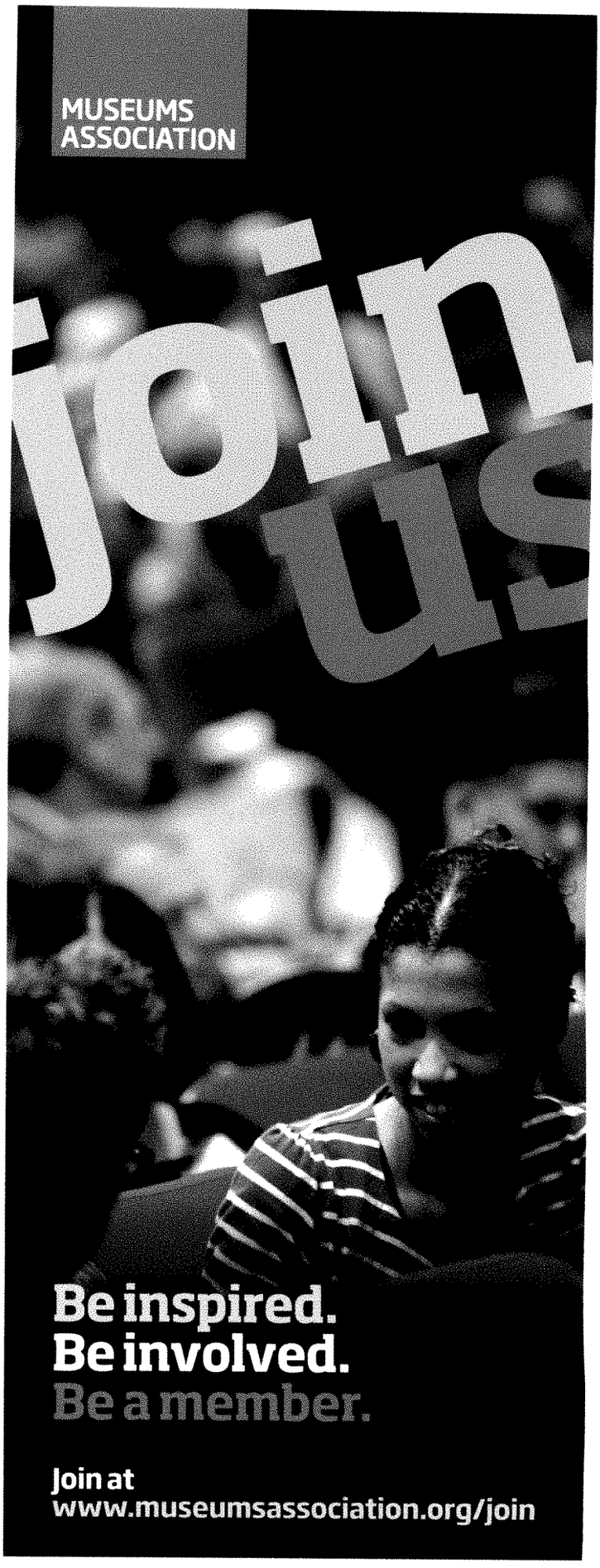

DCMS still seeking funds for seven non-nationals

Eight months after self-imposed deadline, only National Football Museum has financing

Rebecca Atkinson

Future funding arrangements for non-national museums remain uncertain after the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) said it was still seeking alternative sponsors.

Last October, the DCMS said it would relinquish control of eight non-national museums after April 2015. It planned to find alternative sponsors by April, but has so far failed to do so for seven of the museums. The National Football Museum became the responsibility of Manchester City Council in April.

A DCMS spokesman said: "We are at a stage, with some of the museums, where we are in discussions with possible future sponsors and this will take some time to work through. We cannot make an announcement until the plans are finalised and all parties are content with them."

The Museum of Science and Industry (Mosi) in Manchester has confirmed that it is in talks with the National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI), which includes the Science Museum in London, York's National Railway Museum and the National Media Museum in Bradford.

Mosi is in talks with the National Museum of Science and Industry

Peter Fell, Mosi's interim chairman, said: "Mosi trustees are exploring the long-term benefits that would result from a merger between Mosi and NMSI. Trustees need to be satisfied that the new arrangements will ensure the long-term sustainability of this great museum in Manchester. A lot of detailed work still needs to be done before a final decision is made, and I hope to make an announcement shortly."

But the remaining six museums have yet to name potential sponsors.

Iain Watson, director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, said: "We are in the process of identifying a preferred partner and are optimistic that we will have an update soon."

Katy Archer, director of the People's History Museum in Manchester, said it would meet the DCMS this month. She added that the DCMS had made it clear that none of the museums would be "cut off" if alternative funding could not be found.

In April, the National Coal Mining Museum for England announced it was in talks with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Hepworth Wakefield. But the museum's director, Margaret Faull, said a formal merger was now unlikely to take place.

The other non-national museums are the Design Museum, the Horniman Museum and Gardens and the Geffrye Museum in London.

Dan Jarvis to launch report into arts in the regions

Report to assess value of and access to projects

Gareth Harris

The shadow culture minister, Dan Jarvis, plans to launch a report on "Arts in the Regions" next year.

A spokesman for Jarvis said the report, which is set to be published in late spring, will examine two areas: "access and exposure", focusing on regions where galleries and museums do not collaborate; and the "funding and economic value" of regional arts projects.

"I want to find out if philanthropists with money to spare are more likely to spend it on arts organisations in cities such as London, Birmingham and Manchester than in Luton, Barnsley and Middlesbrough," said Jarvis in a press statement.

The Labour MP for Barnsley Central said other priorities included developing the cultural and creative legacy of the Olympics and "articulating a vision for a 21st-century library".

Dan Jarvis will study the Henley review

"I will also study Darren Henley's independent review of cultural education," he said.

Earlier this year, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Education launched a review, to be led by Henley, managing director of Classic FM. It will consider the cultural education experienced by children from different backgrounds.

Funding news

Lest we forget

The **Heritage Lottery Fund** (HLF) is encouraging more organisations to apply for funding to commemorate the **centenaries of the first world war**.

While there is no new money available, HLF chief executive Carole Souter said it was actively seeking applications for all kinds of heritage projects related to the war. Schemes of all sizes can be funded through its open grants programmes, **Your Heritage** and **Heritage Grants**.

Money is also available through **Young Roots**, which aims to get 13- to 25-year-olds involved with their heritage. The HLF can provide money for the conservation of war memorials, as long as they are part of a wider project to increase understanding of the stories behind the memorial.

Your Heritage grants range from £3,000-£50,000, Young Roots grants are for £3,000-£25,000, and Heritage Grants are for £50,000-plus.

Any organisation interested in applying should initially contact its local HLF office for advice.

The HLF has published a booklet and has online information to show what funding is available. It is also working with **Imperial War Museums** (IWM) to support community groups and organisations to commemorate these centenaries (www.1914.org/partners).

The HLF has recently announced that it has given IWM a first-round pass for its **First World War Centenary** project. IWM can now develop its plans to secure a full HLF grant of £4.5m. The project will create new first world war galleries at the IWM London in time for the centenary of the war in 2014.
www.hlf.org.uk

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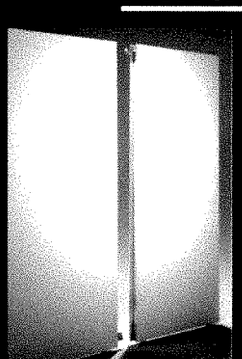

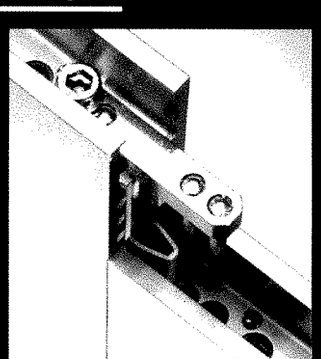

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WORLDWIDE

Mummies' the word: National Museum of Scotland's new space to host mummies exhibition

Fascinating Mummies will be the National Museum of Scotland's first temporary exhibition in the new purpose-built space that forms part of its £47.4m redevelopment. Objects dating from 4000BC – many of which are on loan from the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, in the Netherlands – will be on display from 11 February to 27 May. The exhibition will examine how information on Egyptian beliefs about death has been obtained over time. It will detail how modern science has permitted non-invasive research into mummification, including an account of the DNA investigation of the Qurneh burial group, which was excavated in 1908 and is now part of the museum's permanent collection.

Notts castle scoops award

Museum wins £60,000 modern-art commission

Gary Noakes

Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery is to gain a £60,000 piece by artist Christina Mackie after winning the Contemporary Art Society's Annual Award.

The commission, funded by the Sfumato Foundation, was chosen from five pairs of museums and artists.

Mackie's work will draw inspiration from the mineral and natural sciences collection at the city's Wollaton Hall museum.

Paul Hobson, director of the Contemporary Art Society, said: "Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery's commission with Christina Mackie will result in a significant work that will be shown for the first time at the castle in late 2012 and then remain an important part of the ever-evolving collection."

The award is the only one that supports the creation of modern art for public collections.

Cuts fuel loss of expertise at rural museums

Report says expertise is being lost as cuts lead to senior curators leaving

Patrick Steel

A report on rural museums entitled "Rural Museums: Ten Years On" has found the loss of curatorial expertise as a result of spending cuts has led many collections to be "orphaned".

The author of the report, Hilary McGowan, said: "I've seen only the tip of the iceberg. Like most things that affect collections care, it will be a while before we see the impact [of the cuts].

"In some museums, the corporate memory is non-existent. Small museums have the most to lose from this. We have to ensure that staff are aware of this and that collections are not just locked in the heads of senior curators."

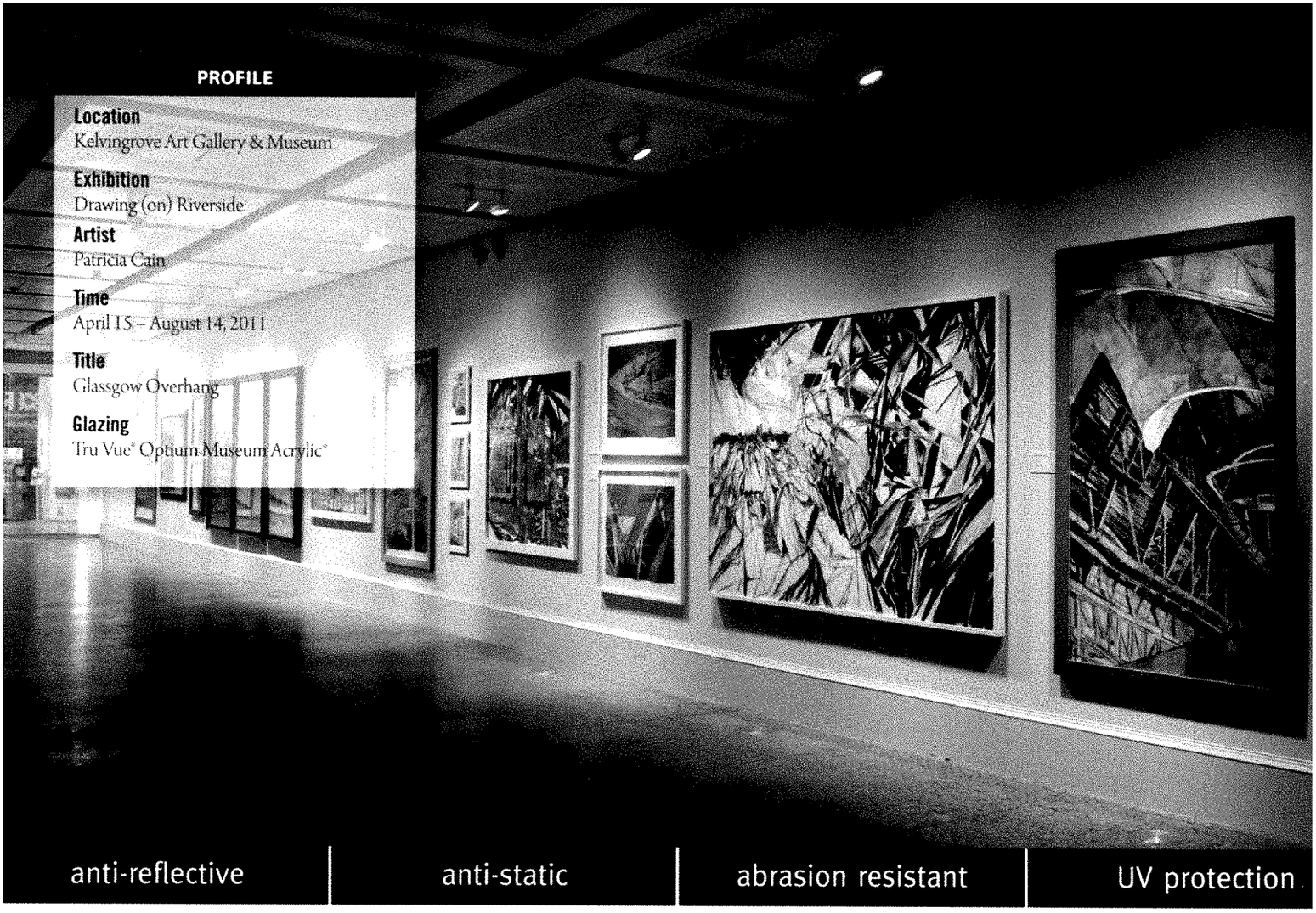
Museums such as the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum have seen a big rise in volunteer numbers

David Walker, the chairman of the Rural Museums Network (RMN), which commissioned the report, agreed that this was an issue. But Walker pointed to the RMN's work on the distributed national collection and the development of the network's online discussion group, which includes retired curators among its contributors, as examples of ways in which rural museums were working to overcome the loss of expertise.

The report also highlighted a 365% rise in the number of volunteers at rural museums since 2000.

The report estimates that volunteers are worth more than £10m to UK museums each year, and asks whether rural museums are the inventors of the Big Society.

"On the one hand, this is worrying because lots of places have fewer staff or are losing staff," said McGowan. "But on the other hand, it is encouraging because it shows that museums are engaging with the public more."



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Budget cuts leave London fire museum homeless

Brigade authority plans to close museum's current home in April

Gary Noakes

Cuts monitor Campaigners are to press for a new home for the **London Fire Brigade Museum** following expected approval for its closure as Museums Journal went to press.

The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority was due to approve closing the museum as part of its annual budget review. The museum is in Winchester House in Southwark, which is the London Fire Brigade Training Centre. But under the review, training will be outsourced and the fire authority is proposing to close the building in April.

The Friends of the London Fire Brigade Museum, which costs about £80,000 a year to run, hope a new home for the collection can be agreed at the Old Fire Brigade Headquarters on the Albert Embankment.

Winchester House is due to be shut when the fire brigade's training is outsourced

The Friends' Dave Rogers said the museum attracted more than 12,000 visitors a year and raised up to £30,000 annually from its shop.

"It's odd to lose it in the year of the Cultural Olympiad," he said. "Our main concern is that if the collection goes to storage, it will be broken up."

Rogers said mayor of London Boris Johnson was keen for the 15,000-item collection to remain intact.

Meanwhile, Ryedale's **Malton Museum** is mounting a Fifty Favourite Finds exhibition before it loses its home at the town hall. The museum will close on 29 February when the lease on the district council's building runs out and the authority moves to cheaper premises.

Chairman of trustees David Lloyd-Williams said: "We have not had to pay for premises for 80 years and are not in a position to pay."

The collection, which is mainly archaeological, will be put into storage in March if a new home is not found.

Volunteers may be used to keep the **Captain Cook Birthplace Museum** open during the winter. Middlesbrough Museums & Galleries Service has closed the museum for the winter as part of its budget cuts, and is in talks with local groups to see if reopening before next spring is feasible.

Kids take over 50 museums

Kids in Museums initiative is heralded

Gary Noakes

Fifty museums and 500 children took part in this year's Takeover Day, organised by Kids in Museums.

Takeover Day, which included museums in Falmouth, Tyne & Wear, Liverpool and London, aims to give children experience of "meaningful roles", such as working on the front desk.

Dea Birkett, director of Kids in Museums, said: "Not only was it more museums than last year, the work they did was bigger and better.

"We had more resources, so we could give each child an I'm Taking Over pack. As there was also an expert adviser, there was all sorts of support that we did not have last year."

Birkett said that for the first time, work would continue throughout the year to foster relationships between museums and those who took part.

World news digest

Abu Dhabi: The 24,000 sq m Guggenheim Museum planned for Saadiyat Island has been put on hold after the emirate cancelled the construction contracts for the Frank Gehry-designed building. The emirate's Tourism Development and Investment Company has returned bids to the 11 contractors that took part in the tender process. The museum is now scheduled to open in 2015.

Australia: Hetti Perkins, an indigenous art curator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, has resigned from her post, saying that her exhibition proposals "are not progressed beyond successive presentations", and that the gallery's plans for a Yiribana gallery for indigenous art had stalled. Perkins hopes to establish a national indigenous cultural centre in Sydney.

Israel: An 18,000 sq m wing opened at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art last month. The Herta and Paul Amir Building includes a temporary exhibition gallery that is hosting an opening show dedicated to works by Anselm Kiefer.

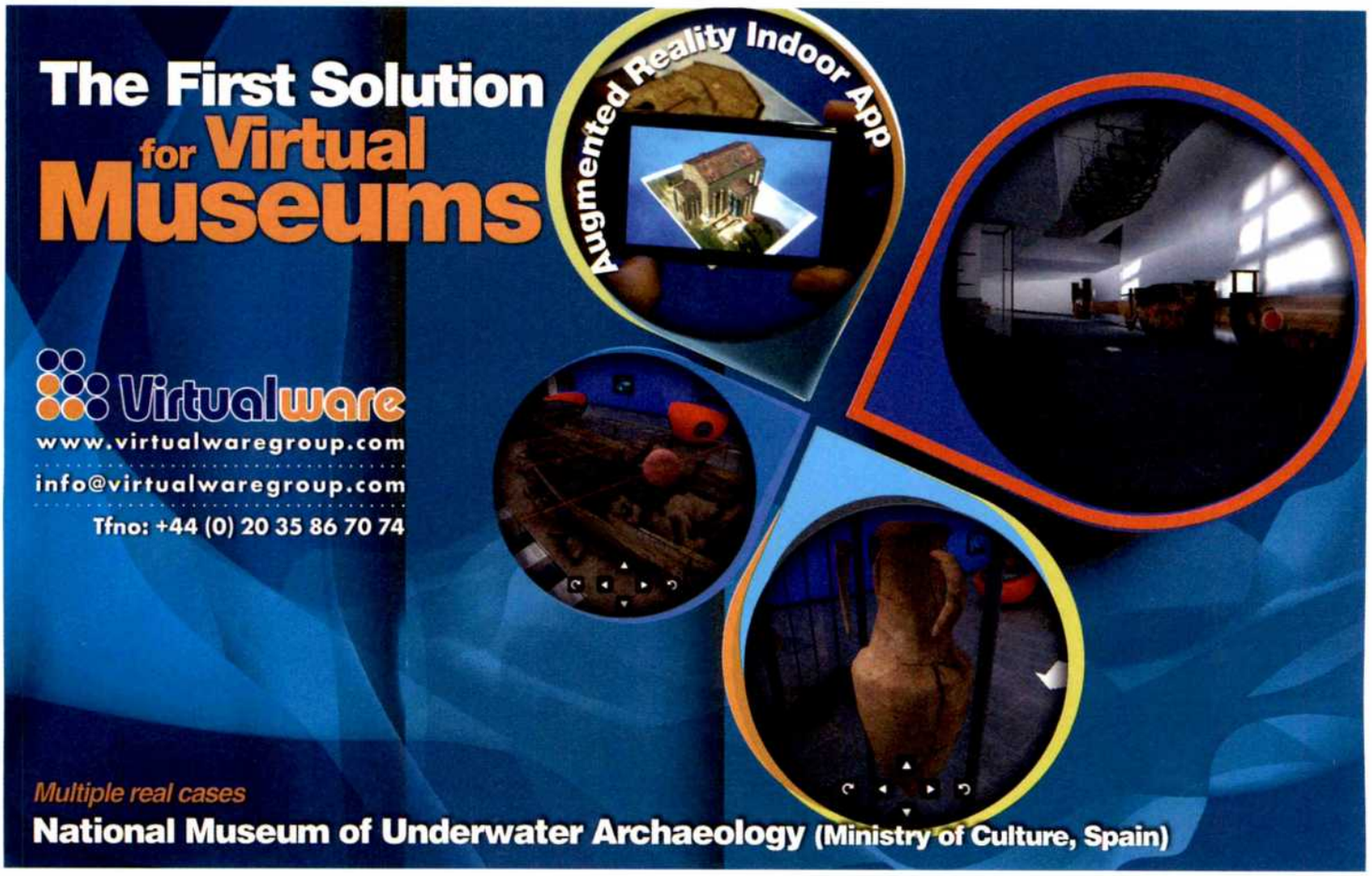
US: The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston has purchased its first impressionist nude, Gustave Caillebotte's Man at his Bath (1884). The acquisition will be part funded by deaccessioning eight works including Camille Pissarro's View from the Artist's Window, Eragny. The Caillebotte work was bought from a private collection for an undisclosed sum.

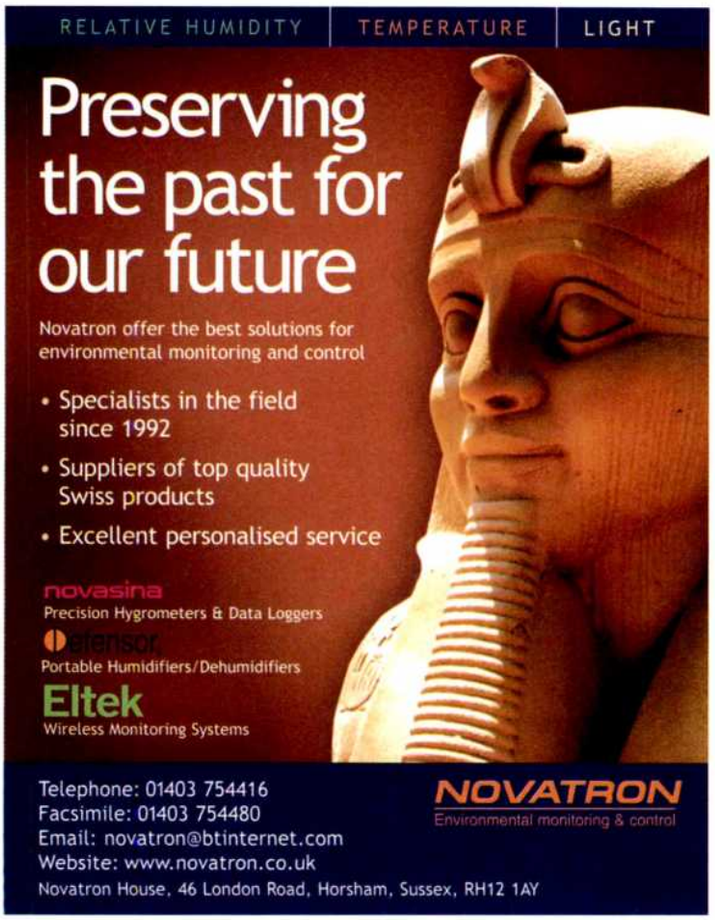
US: A 2,700 sq m museum dedicated to Clyfford Still opened last month in Denver. The Still Museum collection includes about 2,400 works created between 1920 and 1980. A work by the abstract expressionist, 1949-A-No 1, sold for $61.7m at Sotheby's New York last month – a record for Still. The city of Denver consigned four Stills to the auction to help fund the museum. Meanwhile, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, funded by heir to the Wal-Mart retail empire Alice Walton, was also inaugurated last month.

A new wing has opened at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art

US: More than 130 works by Maurizio Cattelan went on show last month at the Guggenheim New York in the Italian artist's largest ever show (until 22 January 2012). The works, including We Are the Revolution and the headline-hitting sculpture of Pope John Paul II felled by a meteor, dangle from the ceiling of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed rotunda. The museum launched its first mobile app based on the exhibition.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, the Guardian, artinfo.com and BBC





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Free thinking is still in vogue

UK governments have committed to free entry to nationals until the next spending round

Geraldine Kendall

This month marks 10 years since free entry was implemented in England's national museums and galleries. The devolved nations led the way in April 2001, with England following suit eight months later.

Those with longer memories might regard it as a reintroduction – entry charges were originally imposed after funding cuts and ideological pressure from successive Conservative governments in the 1980s.

The current Tory-led coalition has so far proved more supportive of the scheme, which is subsidised through grant-in-aid and a VAT exemption.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) plans to celebrate the anniversary with a high-profile breakfast at London's Natural History Museum, where culture secretary Jeremy Hunt will join the policy's original architect, Labour peer Chris Smith, in toasting its success.

At first glance, the results speak for themselves. In England, for example, visits to nationals that previously charged have risen by 151% over the past decade – 18 million last year, compared with 7.2m in 2000-01.

The National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC) estimates that, given its wider benefits to tourism and the economy, free admission generates £3.50 for every £1 it costs.

But while the scheme has brought huge rises in footfall, it has been less successful in other key objectives. A 2009 study by Tourism Insights found that the anticipated increase in trading income to make up for lost ticket sales has not materialised.

The National Maritime Museum has introduced a £10 annual charge to visit the Meridian Courtyard and Flamsteed House

While overall revenue in cafes and shops grew with rising visitor numbers, the research found that spend per head remains static, and additional income has been matched by the increased cost of wear and tear caused by larger crowds.

Evidence also indicates that targets for low-income and ethnic-minority groups have not been met. Cultural consultant Sara Selwood, who has been researching the impact of the policy, says much of the rise in visitors is existing museum users making repeat trips.

"That sits uncomfortably with the realisation of the policy and the money spent on it," she says. Visits by low-income groups to London's nationals actually fell 7.2% between 2009-10 and 2010-11.

But a spokeswoman for the NMDC says that while the overall number of visitors from minority groups has risen less steeply, many individual museums have seen significant results.

David Anderson, director-general of National Museum Wales, agrees, saying the overall picture is skewed by London institutions with a different audience profile. Target groups now make up nearly 40% of visitors to Welsh museums, he adds.

Despite the scheme's undeniable impact, calls to scrap free admission remain. Four years ago, then shadow culture secretary Hugo Swire caused a stir when he said that nationals should be given the option to reinstate charges.

The Conservative Party hurriedly sacked him and distanced itself from his proposal, but at a time of economic hardship, the argument against free admission is starting to find more fertile ground.

Many believe that the scheme offers nationals an unfair advantage, drawing visitors away from attractions that have to charge. There is also disquiet that while the nationals, with their huge numbers of overseas tourists, retain their subsidy, some regional museums have had to reintroduce charging for tax-paying visitors, following devastating local authority cuts.

Earlier this year, Labour MP Tristram Hunt called for free entry at nationals to be scrapped, saying funding should be diverted to struggling regional museums.

However, such arguments do not justify a U-turn on free admission, says former Art Fund director David Barrie, one of the scheme's original proponents. He says money saved by scrapping the policy would be unlikely to find its way to other museums; rather, bringing back charges would just ensure more misery for everyone.

Barrie thinks that introducing even nominal charges would be a false economy, citing the Victoria and Albert Museum, which "turned from a museum into a mausoleum almost overnight", after introducing a £5 charge in 1997. "Visitor numbers plummeted and the effect on staff morale was disastrous," he says.

The Museums Association has calculated that the public subsidy per head actually increases when charges are levied because of an average 40% fall in visitor numbers.

Chris Smith says charges would have a detrimental effect on the sector as a whole. He adds that one of the greatest impacts of free admission has been the generational shift in attitudes to cultural heritage, with "huge numbers of families with children" now able to enjoy the nation's treasures – to the benefit of all museums.

But, as was the case in the 1980s, the ideological and economic case for free entry may eventually be chipped away by severe funding cuts. London's National Maritime Museum has introduced a charge to visit its Meridian Courtyard, while nationals in Scotland have indicated that they may need to impose charges if their funding is cut further.

Governments across the UK have pledged to protect free admission until the next spending round. It remains to be seen whether that support will still be there in 10 years' time.

Free museums with the biggest rise in visitor numbers since 2001

	2000-01	2010-11	% change
National Museums Liverpool	710,210	2,622,228	269.2
National Maritime Museum	799,777	2,433,163	204.2
Natural History Museum	1,630,466	4,682,783	187.2
Victoria and Albert Museum	936,652	2,619,505	179.7
Mosi (Manchester)	287,814	638,347	121.8

Call to action for cultural education

Mick Waters

The Cultural Learning Alliance's report, ImagineNation: The Case for Cultural Learning, makes clear the measurable impact of cultural learning on the lives of children and young people – from improving their academic attainment and cognitive skills to encouraging civic responsibility and promoting the value of further and higher learning.

A lifetime in teaching has taught me that giving children the chance to visit museums and galleries and other cultural organisations is invaluable, not only for the outcomes described above, but because the experience of engaging with culture and the arts helps children to appreciate human achievement and to engage with their wider world. These benefits are immeasurable: all children should paint, photograph, build, sing, move and dance, sew and cook. We want our children to live their lives joyously.

However, the report has been published against the backdrop of significant cuts and policy change. Factors include: a severe reduction in public sector funding; a review of the national curriculum that has a stated emphasis on "traditional" subjects; the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (which is encouraging schools to invest their resources in a narrow range of GCSE subjects that does not include the arts); increasing pressure on teachers to be driven by data and targets; and the fragmentation of our school sector and local authority services. The constitution of our education system will never be the same again.

If we are to meet these challenges then we must argue strongly against the false dichotomy between "vocational" and "academic" subjects. The arts and culture are both practical and theoretical – they are rigorous disciplines and provide a range of opportunities for young people to increase their knowledge. And cultural organisations – whether national institutions, small local dance companies or museums – need to find creative ways to ensure that their commitment to learning and young people can continue to grow and be integral to their mission and work.

More than 6,500 cultural organisations have come together through the Cultural Learning Alliance to share their ideas for creating the conditions for cultural learning and to advocate for the arts as an integral part of a young person's development.

The alliance has made a number of recommendations to government for practical actions. These include a call for no children's centre, school, youth service or other setting to be judged beyond "satisfactory" by Ofsted unless they provide evidence of their commitment to the arts and culture. There are also recommendations for museum and gallery structures and funding; these include calls for key performance indicators that assess depth of engagement, outcome and impact, and which encourage progression and long-term engagement between children and cultural organisations; and for every publicly funded cultural organisation delivering learning to have at least one learning trustee.

The alliance spans the cultural and education domains, and provides a vehicle for us to work together to influence policy and practice, champion solutions and focus on quality of experience. Over the next few months members will be building on the arguments set out in ImagineNation to create a national strategy for cultural learning – now is the time for us to mobilise and contribute. Our children need our commitment.

Mick Waters is a professor of education at Wolverhampton University.
www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk

The diary of a national museum director *Part 18*

There is a belief that, between preparing for Christmas on the Med and the skiing season, we national museum directors do no work for three months. Nothing could be further from the truth. Each November we decamp to Sir N's country estate to decide the future of the UK museum sector. Only then do we go abroad.

We identified the key opportunity for next year. This is that the top London nationals are getting richer while, thanks to Jeremy – I do admire him – and ACE, the rest of the sector is getting poorer.

Sir M, for example, got a windfall gift of £25m from Lord Tesco last year, on the condition that he used it to "destroy smaller museums" (much like his organisation has wiped out corner shops). But, once you have had the champagne party, with the tame regional museum partners putting on a show as if they are Roman slaves, how on earth can you spend the money?

Our idea is simple. England has too many national museums. Scotland has only two, both in Edinburgh. So each London national will establish an outpost in a Scottish city.

The V&A has already tested out the strategy in Dundee. And, incredibly, rather than support its own museums, the Scottish "nationalist" government has been fooled into giving it huge sums of money. How we laughed!

So the British Museum will open its own Lewis Chessmen Museum in Edinburgh, the National Gallery in Glasgow, the Tate in St Andrews, and so on. Poor old Soane Museum! All it got was Arbroath.

At first, we were stuck for a name for the scheme. Then Sir M suggested "Lebensraum" – perfect.

PAUL BOMMER

Let's seize the digital opportunity

Nick Poole

In the midst of last month's Eurozone crisis, you could be forgiven for failing to notice another, quieter European development. In October, the European Commission adopted "Recommendation C(2011) 7579 on the Digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation".

This innocuous-sounding document has far-reaching implications for the future direction of museums, archives and libraries across Europe and their relevance in an increasingly connected world.

Since 2008, the European Commission has been working towards A Digital Agenda for Europe, a multibillion-euro programme promoting the use of technology for business, government and social welfare.

The new recommendation mandates EU member states to support the Digital Agenda for Europe by increasing investment in digitisation and online access to cultural heritage in a strategic way. Specifically in the UK, the recommendation challenges the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the governments of Wales and Scotland and the Northern Ireland Executive to make 3.94m digital assets available to the Europeana website by 2015.

Unlike most other European nations, the UK has no national digitisation strategy. This lack of coordination between policymakers and funders has seen us squander the early lead achieved through the £50m New Opportunities Fund Digitisation Programme. Instead of capitalising on this investment, a piecemeal approach has seen much of the content fall into disuse.

The UK government is one of only seven not to make a contribution to the annual costs of the Europeana programme – an attitude which is putting at risk millions of euros of potential investment in UK museums and galleries.

UK cultural institutions have demonstrated extraordinary creativity and resourcefulness in embracing technology, but too many of our most promising digital projects have failed to achieve sustainability due to a lack of strategy and investment.

But things may be changing. Arts Council England is exploring the possibility of a joined-up digital strategy. The Heritage Lottery Fund is proposing to invest in the use of technology to engage audiences. The Digital Public Space, led by the BBC, highlights our role in supporting education and helping to drive digital literacy. The Strategic Content Alliance is uniting organisations to find practical solutions to issues such as copyright, public-private partnership and sustainability.

It is not too late to capitalise on the opportunity for museums to create a new, vibrant and compelling digital offer. What we need is a digital renaissance – a coordinated, programme designed to deliver universal access to our shared heritage online.

Nick Poole is the chief executive of the Collections Trust

The insider

Will the last person to leave the museum...

Maev Kennedy

Ok, the bronze age dugout has gone to the sea scouts, the Women's Institute is delighted with the Naafi tea wagon, but poor old Gerry-the-slightly-foxed-Giraffe is still languishing on the disposals list – I wonder, could we offer him as a Christmas raffle prize?

I'm afraid the Greeks don't want our Aphrodite back. I admit the old label attributing her to Praxiteles was a shade overambitious, but their reply by text message describing her as an oversized Edwardian garden gnome was most unnecessary. Anyway, the Girl Guides love her, and they've now introduced a marble bleaching and scouring badge.

The work experience genius has promised to keep the website going. He'll take the holly wreath off the virtual front door on 12th night and replace it with a pot of snowdrops on the top step, and will continue to add apps and downloads as he dreams them up. I believe his "Iron Museo! Choose a heavy metal sound track, choose an artefact from the collection, and run it through our car crusher" is actually "trending", although I'm not sure what that actually is.

I really have done my very best to contact the paleontology expert, but there's been no word since that last report of his encounter with the hobbit cave bears on his study trip in Tierra del Fuego, and the bounceback message on his email is frankly baffling. So, in the unlikely event that he ever does get back from leave, it could all come as a bit of a nasty shock.

Good luck to the education department with its new free school in the old library building: I'm sure spoken Sanskrit will prove a very attractive offer.

I'll hang the "This temporary closure at short notice is due to staff shortages – we hope this hasn't spoiled your visit" notice on the real front door as I leave. If the building is still standing this time next year, the work experience genius has promised to call round and tidy it up a bit.

Good luck everyone. Will anyone notice we've actually really gone? Do you know, I doubt it.

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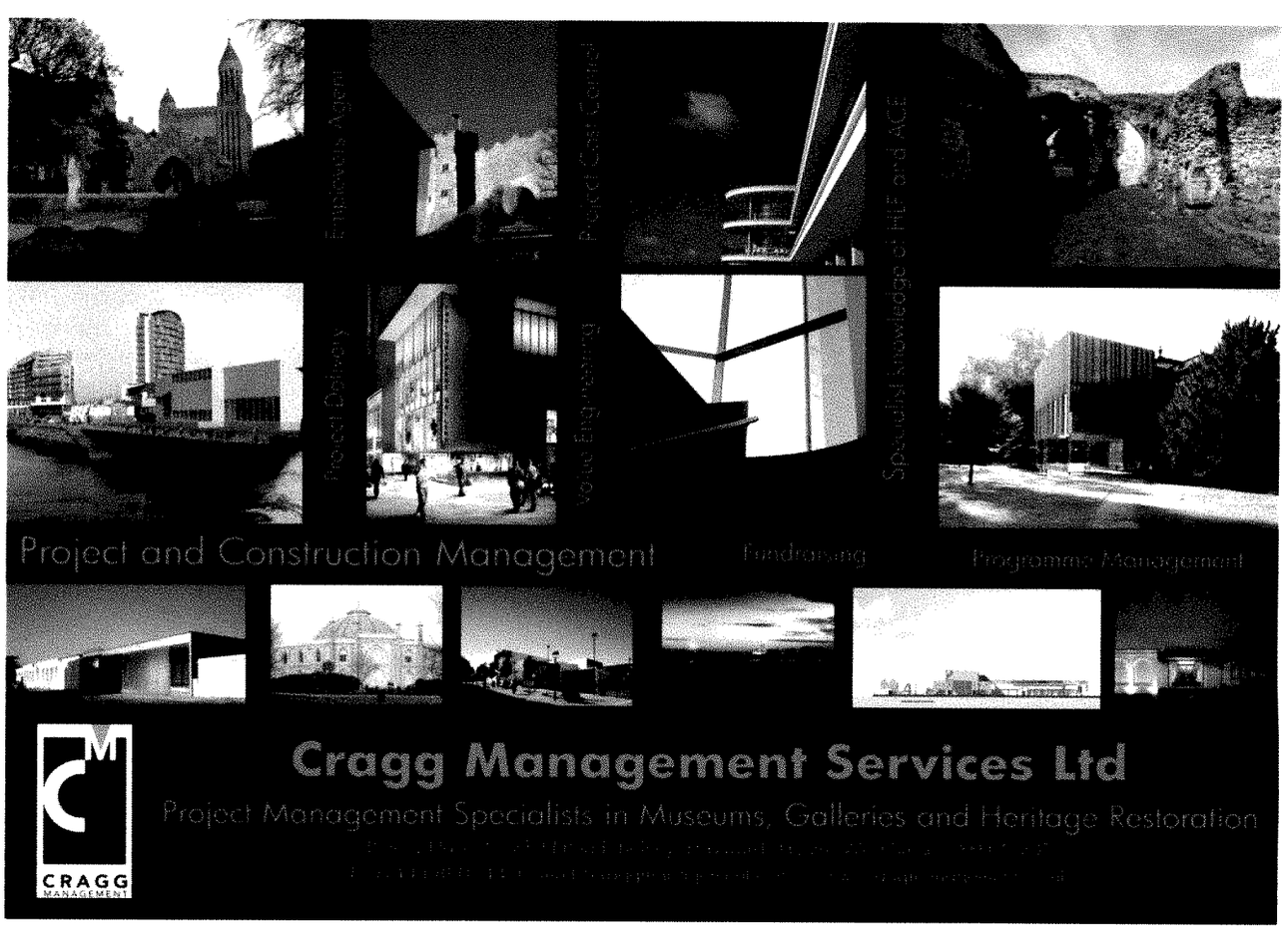


A case for conflict-resolution training

Katie Downey

Does the diversification of museum audiences demand a rethink of the training we provide for staff in the facilitation of disparate responses to collections and displays?

My research would indicate that there is a demand for training that provides customer-facing staff and volunteers with the skills to confidently respond to the public's reactions to museum exhibits.

Those workers who deal directly with the public are often the primary point of contact for visitors to museums. As a result, they handle the public's initial responses to collections and displays. Consequently, specialist training could be necessary.

These are just two points I considered when I started researching the potential for conflict-resolution training in museums. Conflict, if effectively managed, is not necessarily a negative force; if an appropriate environment is established, conflict can stimulate dialogue and encourage inter-cultural appreciation. Museum collections possess the potential to inspire debate and, if supported by trained staff, the ability to accommodate disparate opinions and appreciate diverse experiences. Museum staff given the relevant training could effectively support institutions in their ethical endeavours of diversity and inclusion.

We also need to think about the expectations placed on museum staff operating within increasingly controversial environments. Some museums are tackling issues of contemporary and historical social injustices, and directly challenging audiences to engage with the ideas and objects on display. Museums should be prepared for visitors to respond emotionally to these displays, and should be responsible for making sure that frontline staff are trained to respond positively to audience reactions and resolve any conflict.

Some museums have already identified the need for staff training that supports museum personnel working in these contentious environments. The Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow has certainly faced its fair share of controversy and conflict through its social justice exhibitions and associated programming. Aware of the potential repercussions for customer-facing staff, specific training has been provided to support staff operating in these challenging environments. Staff at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow have sourced conflict-resolution training through external organisations.

Museum staff in contact with the public regularly experience emotional responses from audiences. We need to give further thought to how we support them.

Katie Downey has recently completed her MA dissertation, Training for Conflict Resolution: The Ethical Principles of Training Museum Staff To Facilitate Diverse Audience Responses to Collections and Displays, at the University of St Andrews

From where I'm standing

The boom in Africa is overshadowed by negative views

Felicity Heywood

A BBC news report the other day on Uganda was concerned with "witchcraft". It explained that a ritual of child-sacrifice, which had long disappeared from the culture, had returned. In passing, it mentioned the "economic boom" in Uganda.

Where was the full report on this economic boom? Is it possible to have the negative balanced with the positive?

The positive part of this report touched on a new wind blowing across the continent. While all eyes turn towards the east and the BRIC countries, big things are happening in Africa – the continent with the most natural resources is creating its own opportunities.

Which is why I am making my way to Africa, to spend a few months living there and seeing where my skills fit and what I can offer.

Speaking to museum officers in a number of African countries, it is striking that their agenda is similar to that in the UK. Yes, they have had to address head-on the social ills that affect people. Museums and culture in general that must work hard to show their worth to government in the intense competition for funding. Tactics include becoming more internationally relevant through nurturing global partnerships.

During my travels I will be regularly writing about my experiences, the people I meet, the opportunities I discover on my own website, www.thisisculture.net, with platforms for visitor engagement.

I will have the absolute privilege of living among some indigenous people who are battling to stay true to their traditions despite being removed from their land, which is now a conservation area, where tourists come to see gorillas.

I aim to find out more about how, after displacement, they have managed to empower themselves and build a cultural centre where they have become tour guides and explainers of their culture.

For me, Africa is the future. This will be my fourth trip to the continent, but even so I expect to feel out of my depth at times as well as elated. I am prepared to take the rough with the smooth.

Extinct: natural history keepers in West Midlands

Am I the only reader concerned by the unprecedented loss of natural history expertise from museums operated by local government, especially county services?

When I joined Coventry's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in 1990 there were about 10 traditional keepers of natural history in the region. Over the years, I have seen my neighbouring natural history keepers melt away, with vacated posts never filled. In October, as the last surviving traditional keeper of natural history in the entire West Midlands, I became redundant. Natural history collections in this region are now entirely within the hands of museum geologists, social historians and archaeologists.

Most of these officers have been rebranded as collection managers and with redefined remits. But what I would regard as natural history experts are missing from their ranks. I asked two members of the Marches Group (a working group comprised of West Midlands county museum managers) if the brain-drain of natural history expertise in the region had ever been discussed at their meetings, especially given the fact that I had regularly flagged it up with my own managers for several years. Apparently they don't discuss those sorts of issues.

That pretty much sums up the local government-run museum industry for me. Increasingly out-of-touch, anti-expert, anti-natural history, incapable of engaging meaningfully with the huge environmental and biodiversity agenda and dogged by weak and often surprisingly inexperienced managers. Where did all the heavyweight managers of the past go? Many museums, including Warwickshire, have carried out visitor surveys revealing that natural history is a subject of high interest. In Insight, a survey of the London museum market carried out by MLA Renaissance London, natural history came out as the most popular subject. So why are museums running scared?

Museums like to portray themselves as competent, trustworthy, relevant and reactive. But if an amateur natural historian asked me where they could deposit a locally important insect collection or herbarium representing a lifetime's work, how could I recommend a museum service lacking a natural history expert?

Steven Falk, senior keeper of natural history, Warwickshire Museum, 2000-2011, and senior keeper of natural history and city ecologist at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, 1990-1999

Keep museums free...

Sharon Heal's suggestion that the government is privately in favour of ending its policy of free access to national museums is utter nonsense (*Museums Journal November 2011, p4*).

As we have repeatedly made clear, we are completely committed to free access to national museums. A key principle of our arts policy is that arts are for everyone, which is why the Coalition Agreement pledged that national museums will remain free. The 10th anniversary of free admissions is just around the corner. Let's use the opportunity to celebrate our museums rather than engage in fact-free mud-slinging.

Ed Vaizey, minister for culture, London

... no, don't

I question Sharon Heal's assertion that the 10th anniversary of free entry for national museums is a matter of celebration.

It is arguable that it has grossly disadvantaged small and medium-sized museums by giving the lion's share of government financial support to a small number of museums already best placed to be self-sustaining.

Most museums that do charge take part in the membership version of the Gift Aid scheme, meaning that members of their local communities who wish to attend a museum regularly need pay only once a year. If national museums were running the same scheme, it would maximise the returns from overseas visitors who do not pay the taxes that support our museums.

A 1945 poster from the BPMA archive

National museums themselves have suffered badly from the lack of index linking for the grants put in place in lieu of charging and this has fed through to redundancies and below-inflation pay increases for staff. Many local authority museums felt honour-bound to follow the nationals' lead and are now suffering savage cuts because the local authorities cannot afford this luxury.

The free-entry scheme was an ill-considered pre-election promise by New Labour that was delayed and fudged to only include nationals (free entry for all museums was clearly the original implied intention) and subsequently underfunded with money that could have been more usefully distributed across the nation's museums, rather than just across the national museums.

Erik Blakeley, learning and projects manager, Tank Museum, Dorset

Fort Nelson review

I read the review of the new Fort Nelson redevelopment (*Museums Journal November, p50*). As project chairman, I felt that there appeared to be something not quite right, as this was not the Fort Nelson redevelopers or stakeholders loved. Nor was it the Fort Nelson redevelopment that the local schools had rated excellent, and certainly not the Fort Nelson redevelopment that was currently seeing double the visitor numbers and a 99% satisfaction rating.

I therefore re-read the review and to my astonishment realised that it was not the Fort Nelson redevelopment at all. The review had clearly been written prior to the museum being fully completed in August. Ironically, the review pointed out all the issues that we ourselves had recognised and had spent the last two years rectifying.

As the Royal Armouries had no control over when the review was done, we are not sure how this mistake could have been made, especially as our website, stakeholder management and regular contact with Museums Journal had always indicated the opening date of the new Fort Nelson.

It is obviously very disappointing for all those individuals and funders of the project that such a mistake was made and we hope Museums Journal will make every effort in the very near future to re-review the 'NEW' Fort Nelson.

Peter Armstrong, creative development director, Royal Armouries.

Museums Journal will publish an updated article about Fort Nelson early next year.

Catalyst grants

It is not the case that only Arts Council England (ACE) regularly funded organisations can apply for Catalyst (*Museums Journal November 2011, p4*).

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) welcomes applications for Catalyst: Endowments from museums, and will open a small grants programme to which museums can apply – Catalyst Heritage Capacity Building grants – next April. The current round of Catalyst: Endowments closes to applications on 16 January 2012, and HLF will run a second round of this programme for applications in late 2012.

In addition to meeting HLF's normal criteria, applicants for the Catalyst: Endowments element of the scheme should be a past or current recipient of HLF funding but there is no requirement that museums should be ACE national portfolio or regularly funded organisations.

Catalyst: Endowments and Catalyst Heritage Capacity Building grants are HLF's initial response to views expressed in our recent strategic consultation on how HLF could do more to help organisations across the heritage sector engage with private giving and build greater financial resilience for the future. We will publish our new strategy for 2013-2019 next year, when we will set out in more detail other proposals for helping museums and other heritage organisations to thrive and adapt in the current challenging operating conditions.

Anne Young, head of strategic business development, Heritage Lottery Fund, London

Clarifications

Museums Journal November 2011, p28 The photo caption incorrectly identifies a picture of the Grant Museum of Zoology as being the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, both part of University College London Museums and Collections.

ClickNetherfield would like to point out that it supplied the display cases for the redeveloped National Museum of Scotland (*Museums Journal October 2011, p42*)

In the January issue of Museums Journal

- Is there any such thing as an ethical internship? Geraldine Kendall investigates
- Deborah Mulhearn explores the challenges of displaying manuscripts
- Simon Stephens profiles Simon Costin, the director of the Museum of British Folklore
- Museum of Somerset, Taunton; the Hunterian, University of Glasgow; War Horse: Fact & Fiction, National Army Museum, London
- Plus news, comment, letters, jobs and much more

www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal

Museum Practice online

- The current issue of Museum Practice explores the use of oral history by museums, galleries and heritage organisations. The Oral History Society offers tips for funding digitisation and the Museum of London explains how it is digitising its oral history archive.

www.museumpractice.org

Vox pop

In light of a national museum advertising a freelance education post at less than £8 an hour, are museums exploiting freelancers?

Claire Adler
heritage learning consultant

"Freelancers are becoming the backbone of museum education services, as museums realise specialised temporary staff can deliver flexible services to schools and local communities efficiently. A national museum can't hope to attract professional staff on a wage that is below the living wage for London of £8.30. The advert says a degree is desirable, so it cannot be viewed as a starter job.

Freelancers have additional costs that make this wage even lower, as they need to pay for advertising and insurance. There is no sick pay or paid holidays and no job security for this zero-hours contract. This is not promoting a skills and experience-based workforce, but rather exploiting a weak market where people are desperate for work."

Dean Veall
lifelong learning officer, Winding House, Ty Weindio, Caerphilly

"No, if offered as part of a structured work-related learning programme for young people, that also includes volunteering, work experience, internships and employment such as the post advertised. This form of learning will help diversify our profession by revealing opportunities for employment in museums.

But some national museums are guilty of exploitation in their use of unpaid interns. Recent adverts have been posted for interns in education, marketing and press with placements lasting up to five days for a minimum of three months with only expenses covered, which can be as little as £12 per week! This is the real scandal. This practice will inevitably lead to a lack of diversity in our workforce and stifle innovation in our sector."

Susan Raikes
head of learning and volunteers, British Museum

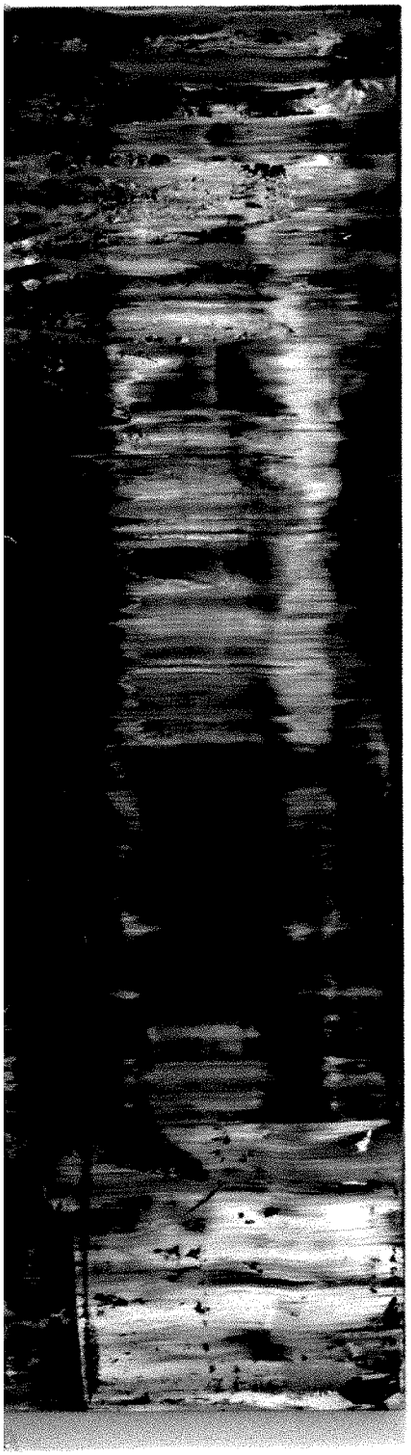
"It is vital that museums have roles that encourage entry into the profession. Very often, the first experience people have of the profession is through voluntary positions. Casual, paid work at entry level is a different route and a way of gaining experience while studying or working. At the BM, our facilitators for the adult and family programmes are part of the pay and grading structure, and the tasks allocated to them are appropriate for the grade and remuneration. Our facilitators are members of staff and work on a casual basis. They can choose activities to fit with other commitments. Their roles are to support full-time staff and freelance educators.

Many facilitators have worked here while studying and are now going into first jobs."

Gina Evans
collection project assistant, Museums Association

"For many, getting any paid work in a museum is an attractive prospect and is preferable to volunteering or completing a series of unpaid internships. Undoubtedly, there will be a large number of keen applicants for this position, but employers should not take advantage of this situation.

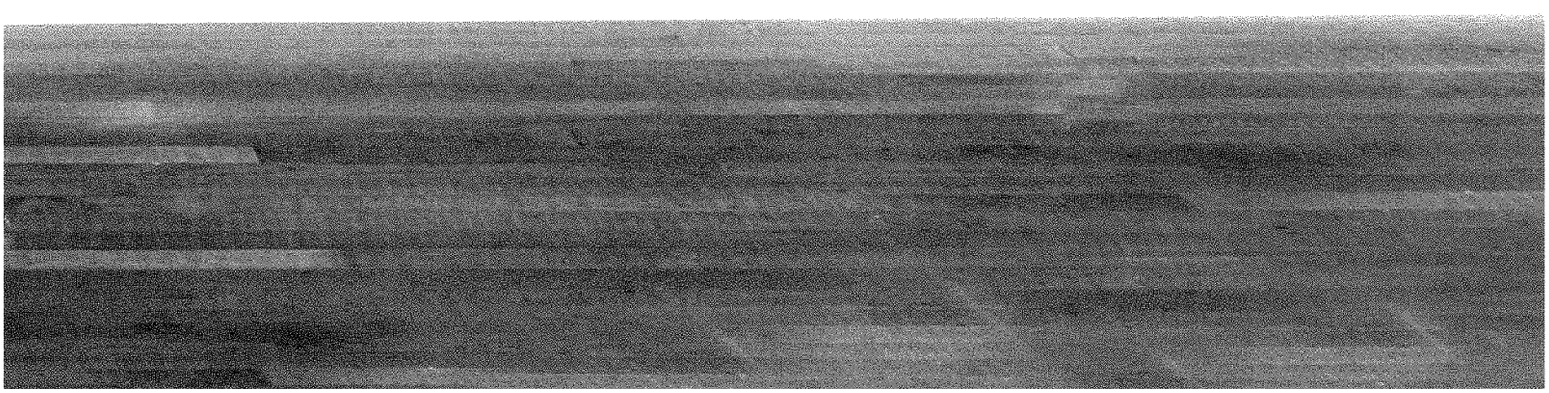
To ensure a diverse and skilled workforce, it is important to have viable routes into the sector that provide decent career development opportunities and pay a living wage. Freelance work can be one route into the sector, but it is important that freelancers are paid at a level that takes into consideration the casual hours being offered, the lack of job security, and reflects the experience and qualifications being asked for."



Ways of seeing

Should galleries allow the art to speak for itself or should they provide information and interpretation for visitors? By *Sara Selwood*

Abstract Painting, which features at Tate Modern's Gerhard Richter show



About 50 years ago, sociologist Theodor Adorno described a central dilemma of art museums: some reduced the visitor experience to the level of receiving information, while others intervened as little as possible, and assumed that the visitor's direct experience of the artworks was paramount.

Thirty-five years later, Tate director Nicholas Serota characterised this problem as that of "experience or interpretation". He said: "Our aim must be to generate a condition in which visitors can experience a sense of discovery in looking at particular paintings, sculptures or installations in a particular room at a particular moment, rather than find themselves standing on the conveyor belt of history."

The same difficulties are still dogging visual art displays. But rather than being restricted to the confines of academic debate, they've become public. Only this summer London's Saatchi Gallery hosted a discussion with the motion: "Museums are bad at telling us why art matters." Speakers included Tate Modern director Chris Dercon, National Portrait Gallery director Sandy Nairne and art critic Matthew Collings.

Leonardo homework

So why has the debate about "experience vs interpretation" resurfaced now?

Earlier this year, a couple of art museum directors were unusually candid about their attitudes to the provision of interpretation.

London's National Gallery is, as a way of dealing with visitor demand for its current Leonardo da Vinci show (until 5 February 2012), restricting admission numbers so as to give people more space to look at the paintings. National Gallery director Nicholas Penny, quoted in the Guardian in May, suggested that visitors will get more out of it if they do their homework first: "They can download all the information that people stand and read beforehand. The whole experience can be properly prepared for."

Looking at paintings is clearly considered to be better than reading labels. However, the gallery is still providing an audioguide for those who haven't made sufficient effort.

Tate Britain director Penelope Curtis is looking to develop new displays that feature a route through the collection via a series of galleries, hung chronologically, with minimal labels and no wall texts. Earlier this year she told the Spectator magazine that she wants to leave interpretation open-ended: "I want people to engage directly with the art, to get hooked, not to read what an interpretation team has cobbled together – if they like what they see, there are endless opportunities to find out more about it elsewhere."

While it sounds like the writing's on the wall for the interpretation team, Tate Britain's new interpretation strategy claims to be flexible. It says the gallery is working towards a more "pluralistic approach to the provision of complementary information". The strategy describes how the chronological hang will prioritise visual experience and "the adjoining focus displays will be accompanied by more in-depth information, provided in a variety of ways". Exhibitions will be taken on a case-by-case basis. This allows for no interpretation on the one hand, or, if Room 5 of the John Martin exhibition (until 15 January 2012) is anything to go by, spectacular (and some might say over the top) forms of interpretation on the other.

Artists and audiences

Art museums often collaborate with living artists and function as a "home" for their work. This raises issues about artists' expectations in relation to public galleries as well as questions about how the relationship between curators, artists and the public might be negotiated.

Developing a rapport with artists isn't the same as developing one with the audiences. The Walker Art Gallery's British Art, 1880-1950, gallery (see p27), attempts to square the circle by generating empathy for the artists among the visitors. Interpretation at the Liverpool gallery partly rests on descriptions of the lives of key artists, and the significance that particular works had for them.

Galleries often commission artists to respond to their spaces. Four of the six artists whose work featured in Turner Contemporary's opening show exhibited their reactions to the gallery's Margate setting. But, according to one arts funder who prefers not to be named, when curators write about the artists that they're working with, there's a danger of them going completely overboard. "Their use of language is a real problem. Catalogues are often hopelessly inadequate. The effect of attempting to make something appear more impressive and authoritative may be to diminish it."

> 'The use of language in catalogues is often inadequate'

An additional problem is when curators do not provide a narrative, or even basic information for the public. The excuse is that "over-interpretation kills", which is backed- ▶

Above: visitors being helped with interpreting artworks at the National Gallery, London. Below: the Towner, Eastbourne, puts gallery assistants in each of its spaces

PREVIOUS PAGES: © SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM. © GERHARD RICHTER. PHOTOGRAPHY: LUCY DAWKINS. TATE PHOTOGRAPHY. THIS PAGE: © DANIEL CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY (TOWNER)

Case study
Turner Contemporary, Margate

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as been proactive in
ringing local groups of

Inspired by JMW Turner's sense of enquiry, Turner Contemporary offers a space for everyone to embrace their curiosity and to discover different ways of seeing, thinking and learning. A strong sense of place, and our role as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the area, continuously informs our programme. We have led projects with schools and the community since 2001, enabling 690,000 people to see our work, or become involved in our development before the gallery opened in April 2011.

At the point when we needed to recruit front-of-house staff we secured funding to train 30 people who were on unemployment benefits. We have recruited 14 of them to work as gallery assistants. They gained accreditation in areas including customer service, health and safety and retail, and also worked with artists.

The gallery assistants have been trained alongside everyone else in the organisation and they have worked with a body-language specialist and a practical philosopher to learn to engage visitors in discussions about artists' work and ideas.

Another of our strengths is the extensive intergenerational work that we have developed. Inspired by Margate's history as a centre for youth culture, Time of Our Lives, brought together people aged 60 and above with 13 to 25 year olds, to consider what it means to be a teenager, both now and in the past.

This project was a key influence in the development of our current exhibition, Nothing in the World But Youth (until 8 January 2012), which features more than 200 works by 94 artists, including Henry Moore, Peter Blake, Sarah Lucas, Andy Warhol and David Hockney alongside work made by teenagers today. As this exhibition took shape, we were aware that all visitors would have a personal connection to the subject matter, and our main vehicle for interpretation became the way works were hung.

Margate is the home of Turner Contemporary and our ideas are borne from a strong sense of place and a growing knowledge of our audiences. This does not mean that we run a provincial organisation. On the contrary, our ambition is bringing national and international attention to the town, and is further proof of the artistic validity of organisations working outside of the metropolis.

Karen Eslea is the head of learning at Turner Contemporary, Margate

up by the legitimacy attached to personal interpretation.

Vivienne Bennett, director of visual arts at Arts Council England, says: "Since anyone can have a view, there's no need for experts. Whereas galleries previously led people, they're now engaged with what people bring themselves. The fact is that people have got different learning styles, and they're gathering information from all sorts other sources, like blogs and Twitter."

One regional gallery manager that I spoke to had been forbidden to have anything more than information labels for a publicly funded, national touring show of contemporary art. "One of the artists didn't want any information about their work made available... the curators were adamant about it. It created distress around our production of ancillary materials. We weren't allowed to have a feedback wall. The visitors were disgruntled. But it helped establish a closer dialogue between them and the visitor assistants."

So, curators are determining galleries' approaches to interpretation, rather than listening to what visitors might need and want. Arguably, there are few other areas of public life in which the protagonists are granted the right to exert such control, if not censorship. Maurice Davies, the head of policy and communication at the Museums Association, says he has come to regard labels as "the microcosm of conflict within museums – not least, the social versus curatorial emphases".

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Glasgow Museums is committed to demystifying the art experience and encouraging its visitors to take a personal journey through layers of interpretation. Victoria Hollows, museum manager of the city's Gallery of Modern Art, says: "Texts should be within the reach of every visitor, ranging from the first-time visitor to the seasoned scholar."

Text or no text?

Glasgow's policy is to stick to 30-word labels for all its displays, which goes against the grain of fine-art culture. Mark O'Neill, the director of policy, research and development at Glasgow Museums, says that the only criticisms made about Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum's 2006 refurbishment were by art critics, who accused the museum of dumbing down to the lowest common denominator.

What gallery staff observe is that visitors struggle without labels. While some in the art world like to believe that labels stop people looking at art, Kathleen Soriano, director of exhibitions at London's Royal Academy (RA), has noticed that "the absence of labels can make audiences quite nervous. They tend to walk past more quickly." The public's complaints about wall texts and labels only ever tend to be about legibility.

A central issue for art interpretation has to do with how much of it there is. Sarah Hyde, former head of interpretation at Tate Britain, says its odd that "science curators worry that visitors don't get enough text, but art curators worry that they're getting too much".

However, the fact that many galleries emphasise the virtue of direct experience, doesn't mean that interpretation isn't available: it just isn't necessarily available near the object, and it may not be text or wall-based.

A raft of publicly funded contemporary art galleries have opened over the past few years. Several are using knowledgeable gallery assistants to enhance the visitor experience. Margate's Turner Contemporary, which opened in April, relies on its team of navigators to help people get more out of the gallery and the exhibition (see p25). The Towner gallery, which reopened in Eastbourne two years ago, positions assistants in each space to improve the experience for visitors.

Most art galleries are providing increasing amounts of content online. Visitors can download free podcasts from the National Gallery, the RA and Tate. And Tate Channel, the organisation's online media outlet, has more than 1,000 items available, including curators' blogs and interviews with artists. This complementary information isn't just a marketing tool. It's increasingly recognised as a commodity in its own right. An extreme example is Tate's recently announced plan to develop a four-year programme of artist performances created specifically to be broadcast live online.

> 'The absence of labels can make audiences quite nervous'

Over and above the usual types of paid-for information (such as audioguides and catalogues), galleries are exploiting a range of other knowledge-based services. Tate offers private guided tours from £5 to £1,000. Prices vary according to the size of the group, but costs also relate to the status of the guide, the degree of exclusivity guaranteed, and so on.

While the opportunities are probably greatest at the London nationals, the market potential isn't being ignored elsewhere. Turner Contemporary is offering a £2.50 option of 60-minute sessions tailored to a specific group and adaptable for any age.

Perhaps the solution to the "experience versus interpretation" dilemma lies in a compromise between the interpretation provided and the nature of the experience available. Alexander Sturgis, the director of the Holburne Museum in Bath, recalls a moment on a museum course in the days when the accepted wisdom was to explain everything.

"We were asked to recall an event that was significant in our own museum-visiting experiences," Sturgis says. "We all described the moment when we started thinking about something that no one else had spotted."

Sara Selwood is an independent writer, researcher and consultant

Above: Tate Britain is providing more information online to complement what is available to visitors in its galleries

© MATT STUART (TATE BRITAIN); HTTP://MATTTHOMAS.CO.UK (WALKER ART GALLERY)

Case study

British Art 1880-1950 at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

British Art 1880-1950 is the most recently refurbished permanent collection gallery at the Walker. It makes the fine and decorative art collections more engaging to a wider range of audiences and explains a complicated story about how Victorian art changed into modern art in an accessible and interesting way.

Audience research had shown that visitors found a chronological display of art in this time period confusing, so the project team developed four clear themes that root the artworks firmly in their historical context. Visitors also wanted more information about the lives of artists, while schools need information relating to the curriculum. Labels provide this multilayered information and an interactive audiovisual timeline links historical events, artists and art movements. An interpretive approach, familiar in museums, encourages exploring through doing, touch and sound to enable alternative ways for a wide range of audiences to engage with the works on display.

Throughout the project, the challenge was to provide plenty of information and engagement while retaining a strong and coherent visual experience. The resulting displays are designed to display the artworks to best effect with new lighting and surroundings so that people experience familiar works as if for the first time.

Visitors of all ages are delighte including a primary school visitor who was inspired to write: "I like the new room with the feely bits; it made me want to do art."

Reyahn King is the director of ar galleries at National Museums Liverpool

Staff at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, have developed labels that are supported by interactive information

New horizons

Museums are responding to budget cuts by becoming more innovative and focused, as well as looking for partners from outside the sector, finds *Maurice Davies*

In two years, museums have moved from assuming growth was good to accepting cuts as inevitable. After years of being told what to do, they now find that government is offering little guidance – at least in England. Here, the shift from the top-down bossiness of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to the bottom-up encouragement of Arts Council England combines with a minister for culture who offers little sense of direction.

For this article, the second of two on the state of UK museums, I spoke to a range of people about how, in the new climate, they are changing the way their museum operates. I found that successful directors are focusing their work. They also have a sense of humility: they recognise they don't have all the answers themselves and are working with external organisations, groups and individuals. The best directors also work inclusively within their organisations, listening to the full range of paid staff and volunteers.

About three years ago, Sue Hayward, heritage manager for Bournemouth Borough Council, spotted the coming crisis. The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum's Renaissance funding was under threat and public-sector cuts looked likely.

"We were determined to take the initiative and not go into victim mode," says Hayward, who spent two years (and £150,000) working with a range of people to produce a business transformation strategy. This was "a systematic review of everything from energy efficiency through to front-of-house, income generation, conservation-management planning, audience development – everything".

She says that previously there wasn't a strategic vision for the service. "That meant we could only be reactive – we responded to Renaissance priorities and did some fantastic work, but we ended up with two business plans: the Renaissance operational plan and the Bournemouth Borough Council plan."

Now the museum has detailed plans and five clear priorities: reduced dependence on local taxation; focus on Victorian and Edwardian collections; culture change within the museum; community-focused learning and engagement; and reconfiguring the building.

Hayward says it has been about repositioning the service within the council and the community. Much of the change would have happened anyway, but the pressure of cuts means change will be "more of a revolution than an evolution".

Curator Alison Pattison knows where Godalming Museum is going, but has to be flexible about the route to follow. "In a small museum you're dependent on project funding; you have to go with the zeitgeist," she says. "It's like sailing a sailing boat instead of driving a powerboat. You know where you want to go, but you just have to go with the wind that you've got."

Like many museums, Godalming's direction of travel is increasingly towards its community. Pattison says museums traditionally have been places visitors have come to for answers.

"Perhaps there's a recognition that museums can't have all the answers," Pattison says. "In the 1950s you could have come to the curator here and he would have given you a very knowledgeable answer about archaeology, about medieval documents... Whereas, if you come to me I tend to pass you on to someone else for really subject-specific knowledge. I suppose I've become more of an administrator, but also because we're valuing the knowledge that's in the community more."

Pattison says that events at her museum, for example, are more about enabling a community event to happen, ▶

Earning extra revenue is becoming increasingly important – the recently reopened National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh has four shops and three catering outlets

Balcony
Café
Behind
the
Scenes

What does sustainability mean for museums?

"Growing in influence, content, ambition. Better displays and better quality"
Janet Barnes, chief executive, York Museums Trust

"As many people as possible knowing about heritage and caring about it"
Carole Souter, chief executive, Heritage Lottery Fund

"Still here in 100 years, still doing a good job, still building relationships; not dusty and static. Don't create new galleries with soon-to-be-obsolete equipment we can't maintain"
Alison Pattison, curator, Godalming Museum

"Being relevant, being innovative, being connected, and being flexible enough to research and experiment and to measure success in a variety of ways"
Tony Butler, director, Museum of East Anglian Life

"Active disposal as well as active acquisition... Taking a broader view of environmental control"
Sally MacDonald, director of museums and collections, University College London

rather than just conveying knowledge to people.

Godalming Museum's strong links within its community are manifested in its 80 regular volunteers. And museums of all types are increasing their use of volunteers to better connect with their communities. The Russell-Cotes now has about 40, with a waiting list as a result of advertising its volunteer opportunities. In the past few years, York Museums Trust has gone from a handful of volunteers to about 200, with a full-time volunteer coordinator supporting them.

York Museums Trust chief executive Janet Barnes says her organisation is also increasing its use of subject-specialist "fellows" who, paid or unpaid, come and work with the museum for a limited time and hone in on aspects of the collection that the service needs to know more about. The outcome will be an exhibition or a display.

The danger is of a wider pattern of museums replacing permanent full-time staff with casually paid or self-employed people. This can save money, increase flexibility and make it easier to focus activity, but with the risk of losing knowledge, experience and contacts.

Many people will see dramatic changes in their employment patterns if the number of full-time jobs continues to fall and the museum workforce becomes more like that in arts and media: recent figures show that a mere 4% of the cultural heritage workforce (including museums) was self-employed, compared with about 20% in publishing and 50% in television production.

One example of changing working practices comes from the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket (where staff numbers are actually increasing). There, someone works in three different capacities at the organisation: as a part-time paid museum assistant; a volunteer woodsman; and a self-employed charcoal burner.

The better a museum's connections – to organisations, to communities – the more effective and more sustainable it is likely to be. Even the largest museums recognise the benefits of working with others. For Gordon Rintoul, director of National Museums Scotland (NMS), one of the reasons for working in partnership with other museums is to do more than it could do on its own.

"We're a substantial museum organisation but covering a huge range of areas," says Rintoul. "For example, in our decorative and applied arts we don't have the strength and depth of the V&A. It's about recognising our limitations... We're becoming much more partnership-focused. Identifying who we can work with has been given a heightened priority because of resource constraints."

One response to "resource constraints" has been to change the parameters for environmental control to save energy. Hayward has turned off the Russell-Cotes's air conditioning. "It never worked, it was never going to work and it was costing us a shed-load of money," she says.

As well as spending less money, many museums hope to generate more of it. Carole Souter, chief executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, sees the challenge as: "How do we get the best in terms of commercial income without doing violence to what we are here for?"

At York, Barnes agrees that being commercially minded is fine "as long as you remember your core values and why you're there".

NMS's recently reopened main site in Edinburgh has four shops and three catering outlets aimed at different markets. It has increased its capacity for corporate hospitality and can now host dinners for 850 people. With more space, the museum wants "higher net revenue" from its temporary exhibitions.

Rintoul has also found that simple things, such as mak-

'Remember your core values and why you're there'
Janet Barnes, York Museums Trust

Exhibits at the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, which generates most of its own income

FACING PAGE: PHIL SAYER

AH 5446
THE EMPRESS OF BRITAIN
THE "BURREL"

ROBERT PERRY RBSA

Art Exhibitions for Hire

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The challenge of co-production

"Museums are more sensitive and skilful in working with audiences and much more knowledgeable about their communities. [But] how much are museums actually opening up to different perspectives and different ways of working? Are collections records open to user-generated content? How far are we willing for people to have equality with us in our venues and our thinking? It's a really, really hard journey that has a huge amount of uncertainty"
Gaby Porter, consultant

"Be prepared to accept that there are parts of some collections where the community will have more knowledge than the museum. Co-production needs much careful thought... valuing 'traditional' knowledge and learning, but also bringing in other perspectives. It's important not to give the impression that anybody can come in and say anything and it all has an equal status"
Carole Souter, chief executive, Heritage Lottery Fund

'We're becoming much more partnership-focused' *Gordon Rintoul, National Museums Scotland*

ing better use of donation boxes, can increase income. He says that the national museum was already looking at ways to generate more revenue, but this is now happening more widely and with greater focus because of budget cuts. Despite the emphasis on revenue, the museum still has free exhibitions and offers free events, such as lunchtime concerts.

In general, the directors that I spoke to are pursuing a quiet, gentle commercialism rather than trying to screw every penny they can from their visitors.

Different museums have widely differing opportunities for income generation. University College London Museums and Collections benefits from a commercial partnership with a 3D scanning company and from working with its parent university's international campuses. Russell-Cotes has a commercial partnership to sell images of its popular collection online. It is also experimenting with admission charges during the peak tourist season – and every member of staff's job description includes income generation.

The Museum of East Anglian Life already generates most of its own income. About a quarter comes from local authorities, while visitors pay for admission. But the museum's director, Tony Butler, says it is often more effective to put energy into "well-crafted fundraising bids for interesting work" than trying to get significantly more income from visitors.

Partnership working is increasingly popular. It can generate income, create new opportunities, improve quality and bring efficiencies. But partnerships aren't automatically good. They can be extremely time consuming, or can fail.

Consultant Gaby Porter warns against "top-down, hierarchical, policy-driven partnerships" and advises that collaboration needs to be more about doing things on the ground, working with groups and organisations to ask: "How can we work together to improve the service?"

To get a new focus, museum staff need to take the time to stand back, to listen to new voices from inside and outside the organisation, and to think about what they could do differently. But Porter says: "Everyone is so ridiculously busy with the wrong things – reactive and transactional – when they know there's much bigger things they need to attend to but they can't find the time to do that."

Porter praises the Museums Association's Smarter Museums programme: "It gave people space at work for high quality thinking and working with others to create new approaches and new possibilities – we need much more of that."

For more on working differently see: www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/15042011-culture-change

A community event at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum in Bournemouth

Baroness Kay Andrews at a glance

Elizabeth (Kay) Andrews was born in 1943 in Newport, south Wales. She was given an OBE in 1998 and was awarded a life peerage in 2000, when she became Baroness Andrews.

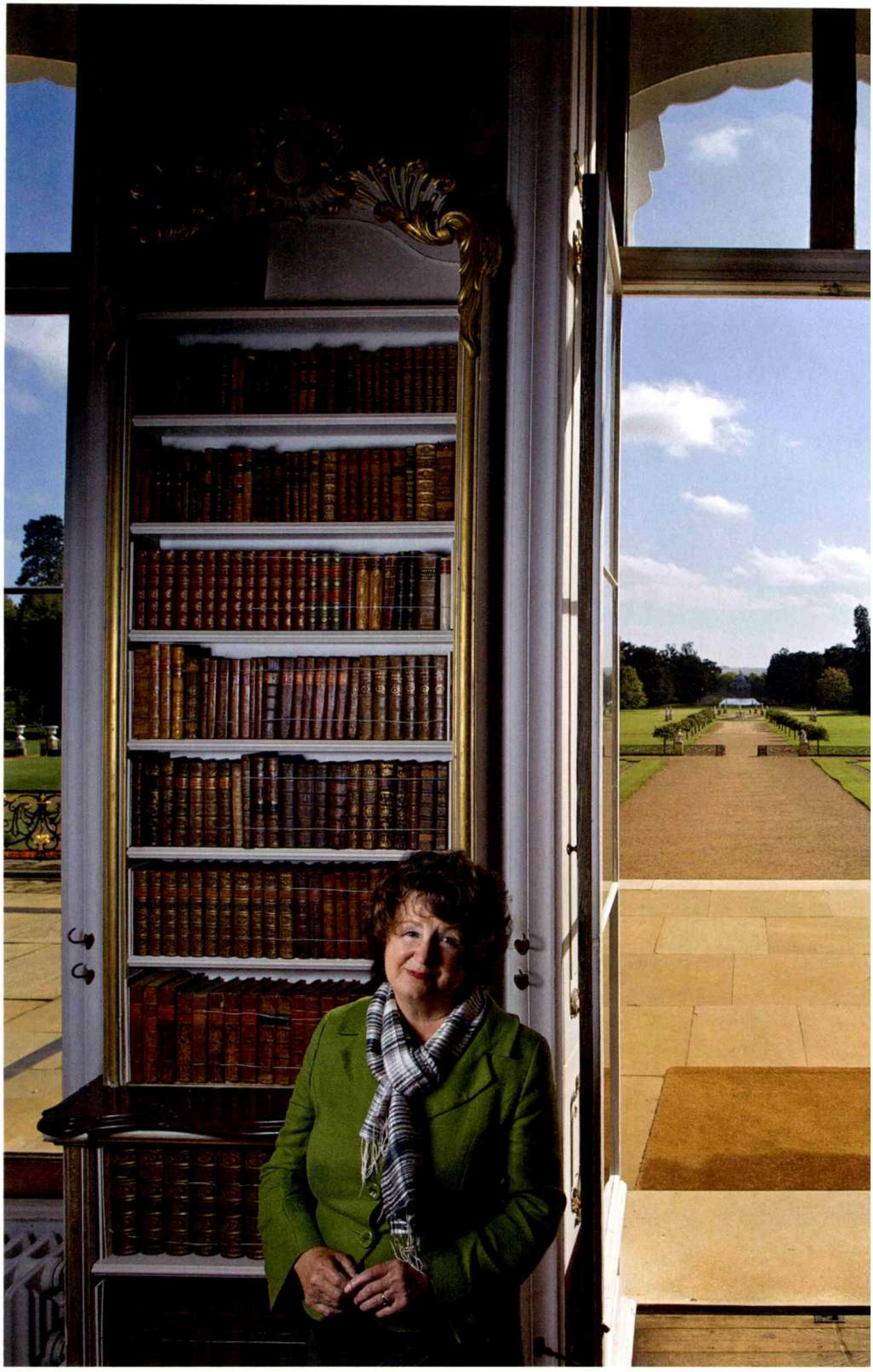
She served as parliamentary under-secretary of state at the Department for Communities and Local Government from 2005 until 2009. Prior to that she was a government whip and spokeswoman in the House of Lords for health, work and pensions, and education and skills (2003-2005).

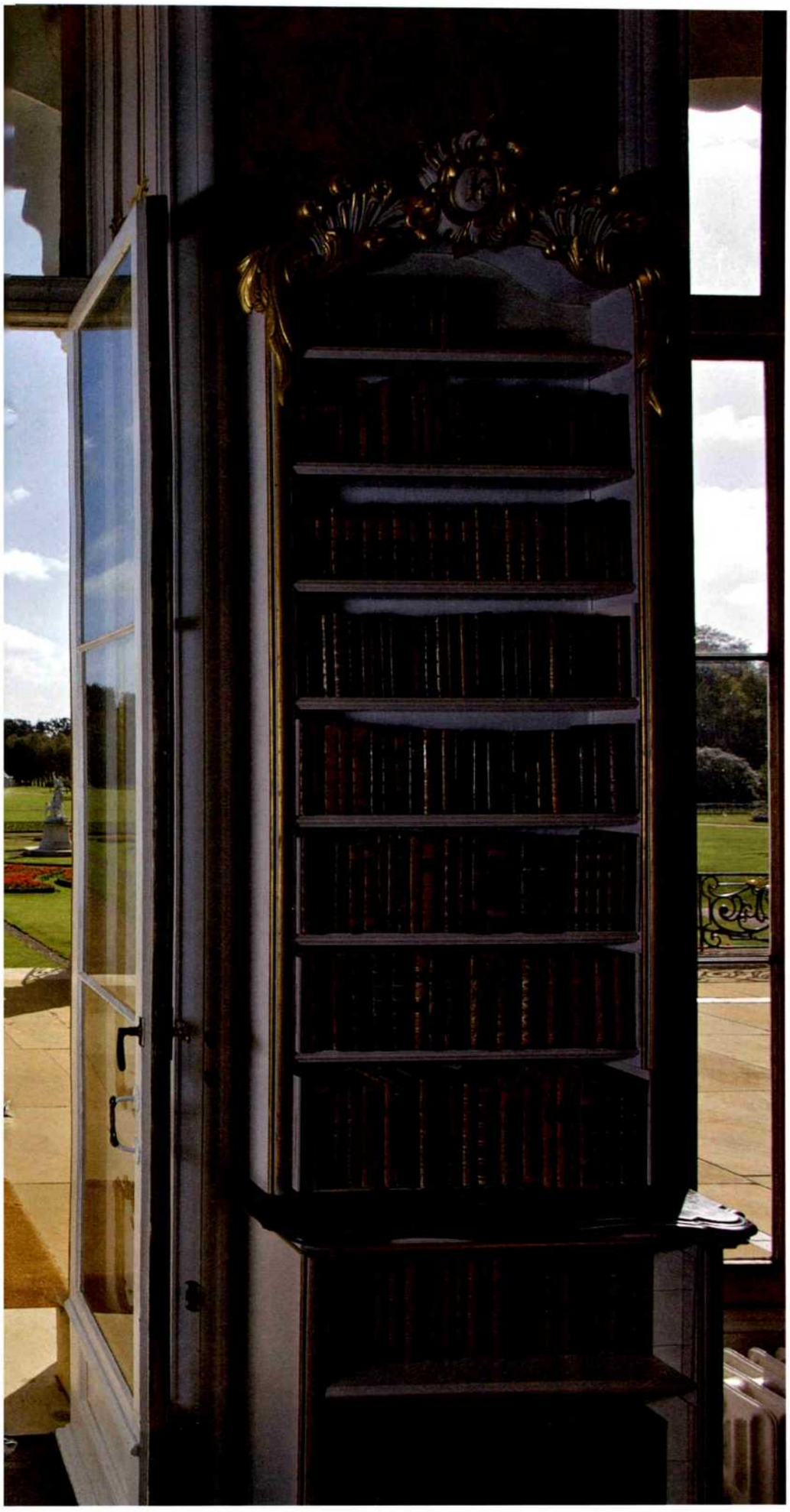
She was a fellow of the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University from 1968 to 1970 and a parliamentary clerk in the House of Commons from 1970 to 1985.

She was a policy adviser to Neil Kinnock when he was leader of the opposition from 1985 until 1992.

From 1992 to 2002, she was the director of Education Extra, a national charity for out-of-school learning that she founded.

Andrews was appointed chairwoman of English Heritage in July 2009.





Taking the long view

After a career in politics and education, Baroness Kay Andrews is now focusing her energy on the needs of the heritage sector. *Simon Stephens* meets her. Photographs by *Phil Sayer*

Kay Andrews, the chairwoman of English Heritage, may have lived in Lewes in East Sussex for the past 40 years, but you can still hear her Welsh roots in her accent. And it's those early years growing up in the industrial valleys that had the strongest impression in terms of her interest in heritage.

"I grew up virtually within site of an old blast furnace in Tredegar and also with the whole paraphernalia of Victorian nonconformism around the very tightly knit communities with their chapels and rituals, and you become very influenced by that," she says. "So I have always had a completely instinctive feel for what makes us what we are and what makes our communities."

Andrews started her four-year term as chair of English Heritage in 2009 and is the first woman to do the job. Before this she held a number of political posts, including a seven-year spell as policy adviser to former Labour party leader Neil Kinnock, who grew up in the same area of south Wales. ▶

Andrews joined the Labour government in 2002 and had a range of roles including parliamentary under secretary of state at the Department for Communities and Local Government from 2005 until May 2009.

"English Heritage is the government's statutory adviser and I know how important it is to maintain trust, to understand the complexities of government and to work with them in a way that helps to solve their problems. It is about being very straight and strong but also being sensitive to the sort of challenges that all governments face. Having been a minister helps me to do that."

But it's challenging to be working with a relatively new government and its policy objectives. One of English Heritage's concerns is the impact of planning proposals that many in the sector fear will lead to a reduction in heritage protection. The National Trust has been very vocal in its opposition to these changes.

Dealing with the cuts

As well as new policies, English Heritage is having to deal with being hit hard by the government's spending cuts. The organisation has had a 32% cut in real terms of the money it is getting from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport from 2011-15.

In his October 2010 letter to Andrews outlining the cuts, culture secretary Jeremy Hunt also said he expected English Heritage to reduce the money it spends on administration by 50% while at the same time increasing its self-generated income.

But Andrews believes a clearer focus on its core areas of work means that the organisation can come out of this stronger.

"We took a hard hit and not one we expected and it has meant we have made some difficult choices," she says. "But I'm very pleased to say that the choices we made were ones that actually strengthened our ability to do the job we are charged with doing."

English Heritage's strategy is to focus on the statutory advice it gives local authorities and government and to make sure it can fulfil its key role in terms of protecting heritage. Hunt had asked the organisation to concentrate on areas where it "provides a distinctive service" and to reduce areas of overlap with other bodies. So English Heritage has started working more closely with organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has stepped in to fill the funding gap left by English Heritage's decision to withdraw most of its contribution for new awards under the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme.

With its own properties, English Heritage has reduced winter opening hours at most of the 420 sites and monuments that it's responsible for. But it has also tried to add something by opening 14 more properties during the winter and offering more weekend activities.

It is also focusing investment on properties where it will get the greatest return.

The recent completion of the restoration of Wrest Park in Bedfordshire is an example of English Heritage's investment in its properties

"We have had to decide how we can best invest in properties that generate an income for us but which also make a fabulous impression on visitors," says Andrews.

This has meant spending money on properties such as Audley End in Essex and Dover Castle, Kent, where an exhibition opened in June that recreated the drama of the 1940 Dunkirk evacuation in the secret wartime tunnels where the rescue was masterminded. More recently, English Heritage has completed the restoration of the gardens at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire.

Projects that will open next year include schemes at Housesteads Roman Fort in Northumberland; Carlisle Castle in Cumbria; and Wellington Arch in London. Kenwood House in north London will close in summer 2012 for over a year for a repair and conservation programme.

But English Heritage's most high-profile project is at Stonehenge, where there is a long-running plan to replace inadequate visitor facilities and to lessen the intrusion of roads and traffic on the site.

"One of our great challenges, which I'm sure will come to fruition next year, is to present Stonehenge in a way that is appropriate for one of the world's great monuments," says Andrews. "For far too long it has been rundown and compromised by a lack of resources and a lack of clarity about what is the best thing to do."

The £27m project moved a step closer in November when the government agreed that sections of two roads running near the stones can be closed to traffic. The aim is to reduce the number of vehicles travelling directly past the stones and to ease congestion.

Andrews says that one of the important elements of the Stonehenge project is the partnerships that English Heritage has created with local museums to provide interpretation and to broaden the visitor experience.

"It is going to be a genuine partnership, and I think it will be good for our scholars,

English Heritage at a glance

English Heritage is the government's statutory adviser on the historic environment.

In 2010-11 it received about three-quarters of its income, £129.9m, from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the form of grant-in-aid. This was cut in the 2010 comprehensive spending review and by the end of the four-year spending review period in 2014/15 it will receive about two-thirds of its income from the DCMS. The aim is to generate the rest from membership, properties and fundraising.

English Heritage membership has risen from 445,000 in 2001 to 758,000 in 2010. Last year, more than 11 million people visited the 420 sites and collections in its care. It gives about £34m in grants each year and advises on 17,000 planning, listed building and other associated consent cases each year. English Heritage employs about 2,000 people FTE.

good for the museums and good for the visitors," says Andrews.

English Heritage has also been working with Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery on a joint project at Carlisle Castle, and with Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery on the Staffordshire Hoard.

"I'm very ambitious for people to get excited about what history means today, and these partnerships will make it easier for that to happen," she says.

Andrews says reaching new audiences is vital for English Heritage, as it is for museums. But this has been made more difficult following the organisation' decision last year to close its outreach department.

"To our great sorrow we had to suspend that but we still have a very strong education programme and a brilliant education team. They are looking to build the sorts of partnerships with schools and other learning authorities that will get people really fired up and keep them coming into the properties."

Some in the sector feel there is a danger of English Heritage turning its back on its very successful grassroots work.

"While many English Heritage properties are leading the field in terms of showing how historic places can be brought back to life, other recent developments – such as the abolition of their outreach department – are a cause for concern," says Ben Cowell, acting external affairs director at the National Trust and author of The Heritage Obsession. "It would be a shame if English Heritage retreated into a purist view of heritage as a specialist professional concern, and not as something that is integral to our daily life."

However, Cowell feels Andrews does not have an elitist view of heritage and her experience and outlook are benefiting English Heritage greatly.

> 'We took a hard hit and it has meant we have made difficult choices'

"Her ministerial experience helps her to see readily how the historic environment can play its part in mainstream government policy," he says. "Her challenge will be to help English Heritage find its unique role and voice at a time of savage cuts."

Despite the financial challenges her organisation faces, which has led to a loss of staff and expertise, Andrews is keen to move forward and for the importance of heritage to be better recognised.

"One of the things we have not quite got right in this country is articulating the economic case for heritage. We somehow have to get people to understand that this is not an added extra it is a priority and it is part of the solution to our economic challenge and our social challenge. I feel that very passionately.

"Heritage is also fun," she adds. "It is what makes us get up in the morning."

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The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Louise Gray hears how Boscobel House has been attracting visitors since the 17th century

Where Boscobel House is a 17th-century timber-framed house in the countryside outside Wolverhampton. Charles II hid from Cromwell's troops here.
What "The lodge, once set in deep woodland, is where the future king took refuge after the battle of Worcester in 1651," says Nicola Stacey, senior property historian for English Heritage's West Midlands region. "We have a descendant of the Royal Oak, where he hid for a day, and two priest-holes in the attic and one of the bedrooms. There is a new exhibition where you can listen to an account of Charles's escape, and a 19th-century farmyard with a furnished dairy, smithy and stable."
Opened Visited by the public as early as the 17th century, Boscobel had a custodian in the 19th century, while remaining a family home. It was re-presented with new displays in April 2010.
Collection "The collection in the house is a combination of 17th-century furnishings – including two verdure tapestries with figures from the 16th and 17th centuries – and 19th-century items," says Stacey. "We have restored the dairy to its appearance around 1900, with original Victorian pieces and specially commissioned replicas – such as local Shropshire settling pans and cream pots. The smithy has its original equipment and it still works."
Help at hand One manager, plus one full-time and two part-time members of staff. There are 25 volunteers.
Budget Boscobel House is in the care of English Heritage, which is funded by government, revenue earned from its properties and donations and membership fees.
Visits Nearly 12,000 in 2010. Boscobel House was open Wednesdays to Sundays, April to October but this year, for the first time, it is also open on weekends between November and March (as are an additional 14 English Heritage properties).
Highlights "The 17th-century tapestry with a hunting dog in the tiny oratory is very evocative of the earliest period of Boscobel when it was a lodge set in deep woodland," says Stacey.
Survival tip "Bringing the farm to life helps people understand how the house has always been meshed with its landscape – today there are runner ducks and silkie chickens scratching around," Stacey says.
Sticky moment "Our custodians were showing Prince Charles one of the priest-holes when he visited in 2001, and realised what an extraordinary thing it must have been for a king to have hidden in such a cramped position," Stacey says.
Current project "We are conserving the Royal Oak, which has been badly damaged by storms, and hoping that it survives," Stacey says.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/boscobel

Top: the site of Boscobel House, outside Wolverhampton, includes a working farm.
Above: the entrance to one of the house's priest-holes. Charles II hid in one as he escaped from Oliver Cromwell's troops.
Left: a 17th-century tapestry depicting a hunting scene

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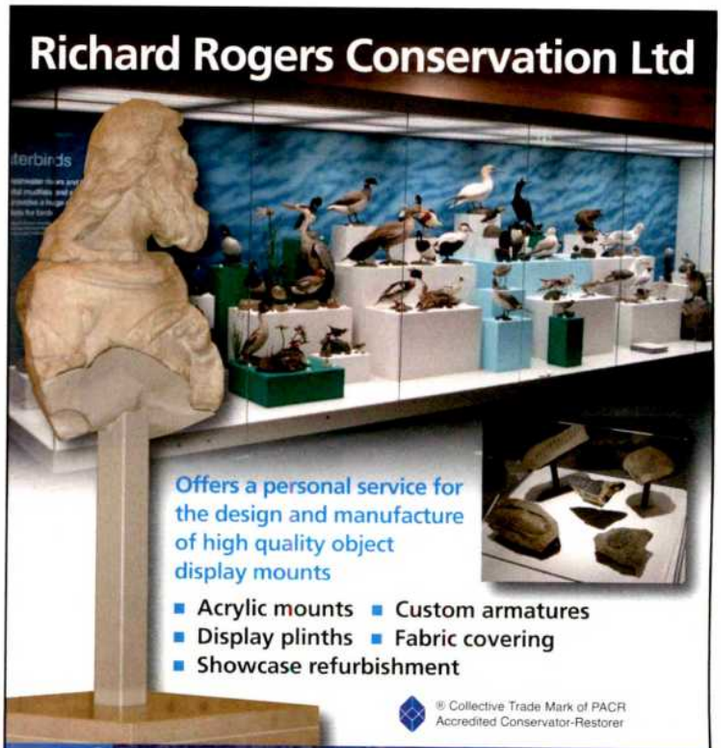

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Reviews

'The work of usually anonymous folk or tribal artists and the symbolism and power they transmit are Grayson Perry's inspiration' *Mark Suggitt* on Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman, British Museum, London

Firstsite, Colchester, p50

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Temporary exhibition

Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman, British Museum, London

Artist Grayson Perry has brought real insight and understanding to his British Museum show, writes *Mark Suggitt*

Grayson Perry's Our Mother (above) and the Frivolous Now (right) are, he says, examples of a "bohemian diaspora"

History museums make great playgrounds for contemporary artists and over the past 30 years it has become common for them to be invited to make "interventions" and "responses" in the galleries or to curate exhibitions. At their best the results can be exhilarating and intriguing, at worst self-indulgent and bewildering.

The British Museum was an early adventurer in this field with Lost Magic Kingdoms at the Museum of Mankind in 1985, where Eduardo Paolozzi produced sculptural collages from the collections.

Fast-forward to 2011: the British Museum is hosting a show curated by Grayson Perry, Turner Prize winner and on the way to national treasure status as our favourite transvestite potter. His work has a high degree of craftsmanship and it has always referenced popular art and culture, both past and present, within his own personalised landscape.

It's quite clear that the look, the feel, the patination and the visual and imaginative power of objects fascinate and inspire him. In addition, Perry has celebrity status and has already curated exhibitions in the past. His show Unpopular Culture, where he chose works from the Arts Council Collection, was learned, witty and accessible. No wonder the British Museum asked him in – he's a bit of a bad boy but clever, articulate and bound to produce a buzz in the media.

But no, it was the other way round. Perry was aware of the past artist-led interventions at the museum and wrote to its director, Neil MacGregor, with his proposal. He wanted a show that had one foot outside the contemporary art world and for his works to be displayed with objects from the collections so that they "might be viewed as examples of the material culture of a bohemian diaspora, a global tribe whose merchants and witch doctors bartered with a wider population by selling artefacts invested with a special quality, the quality of art".

Needless to say, the museum took him on, and Perry began to work with the curators and to start thinking. Artists' responses to collections are artificially induced versions of a process that has long powered world culture; the way in which artists and makers have responded to objects made by earlier generations. Perry sees this cultural confluence as a form of "Chinese whispers" where images and ideas pass across time and cultures through trade, travel, war and invasion.

Perry chose to reverse the process of response. "Why not," he writes, "make the works I am inspired to create, and find objects in this vast collection that respond to them? Somewhere in its endless storerooms there must be objects that echo my concerns and style. I have spent my entire career under the influence of the past. I wondered what I would learn from reversing the process."

A show about looking

The result is the Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman, not an intervention in the existing galleries but a proper exhibition in the Rotunda. Its form is traditional, with an introduction and themed sections introduced with a personal observation. Perry's works are displayed either separately or with associated objects from the collections.

The design is restrained, with grey cases and plinths and no supporting images or interactives, and brief individual labels. Photography is banned and a good thing too: this is a show about looking. It is a "pilgrimage" into his imaginary world and the themes reflect his preoccupations and inspirations; shrines, magic, maps, pilgrimage souvenirs, sexuality and gender, scary figures, craftsmanship, and patina and texture.

The exhibition starts with works inspired by Perry's 50-year-old teddy bear, Alan Measles, and his recent pilgrimage to Germany on a customised motorbike. It leads through the themed sections to the Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman, a work in the form of an iron ship hung with casts of objects from the collections. Perry sees it as a memorial to those often-nameless makers and builders within the collections. Like the Unknown Soldier, he represents all craftsmen and women. ▶

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The work by Perry covers a period from 1981 to 2011 and it is clear that the themes he selected have always been present in his art. His degree showpiece, Early English Motorcycle Helmet, and the later Head of a Fallen Giant illustrate an affinity with signs and symbols and the skill to produce an object with a visual depth to match those of ancient originals.

Perry would make a great forger, and he acknowledges this in the section on Patina and Texture. "I love fakes for they make us think about what it is we see in the authentic."

Curatorial duties

Other earlier work such as the iron Alan Measles on Horseback is displayed alongside medieval pilgrim badges and although the scale and material differ, the stylistic links between them is clear, as is his understanding of, and sympathy with, folk art.

Perry also shows a widening of the range of his work with sculptures in cast iron, textiles and drawings. The results may look superficially old, but his concerns remain contemporary. The Frivolous Now, for example, is the result of Perry plucking random phrases from TV.

The works from the British Museum collections cover a wide range of time periods and cultures. Much of it is ethnographic and would have been held within the former Museum of Mankind. There is also material from Britain and Europe. All of those selected are fascinating and contribute to illustrating the points made within the themes. Some people may find them beautiful, others may find them ugly and crude, but that's a matter of taste and education. What is revealed here is Perry's tastes and aesthetic, and you either share it or you don't.

The work of usually anonymous folk or tribal artists and the symbolism and power that they transmit are his inspiration. Whether we modern people, the receivers, gain different meanings from those originally intended does not really matter. The curator is there to guide our thoughts but we still respond aesthetically and even spiritually.

Perry is interested in well-made things but his taste is for those with a boldness and spontaneity. In the final section on craftsmanship it comes as no surprise that he chose two 17th-century slipware dishes by Ralph Simpson and Ralph Toft and not some cool, cold porcelain.

Perry introduces us to the exhibition by stating: "Do not look too hard for meaning here. I am not a historian, I am an artist. That is all you need to know."

Well, maybe, but in fact Perry provides a lot of personal meanings for why these things matter to him. He has a genuine sense of the past and a real understanding of the creative legacy of tradition. No exhibition is ever truly objective and a personal curatorial authorship has the freedom to say: "This is what I feel about this stuff, what about you?"

So, is this show a success? Well, although I'm not exactly sure what Perry learned from his pilgrimage, it was great to go along for the ride and the view.

Mark Suggitt is the director of Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

Project data

Cost £400,000
Main supporters AlixPartners, Louis Vuitton
Project curator Philip Attwood
Exhibition design Gary Egleton
Graphic design Surface 3
Exhibition fit-out and Perspex showcases Mark II Construction
Glass showcases Hahn Louda system
System showcases installation Moylan Displays
Graphic contractor Leach
Lighting DHA Design
Exhibition ends 19 February 2012

Above: Grayson Perry's Rosetta Vase. Right: the Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman places Perry's works in conversation with selected items from the British Museum.
Below: 18th-century dish made by Ralph Simpson showing a bust of William III

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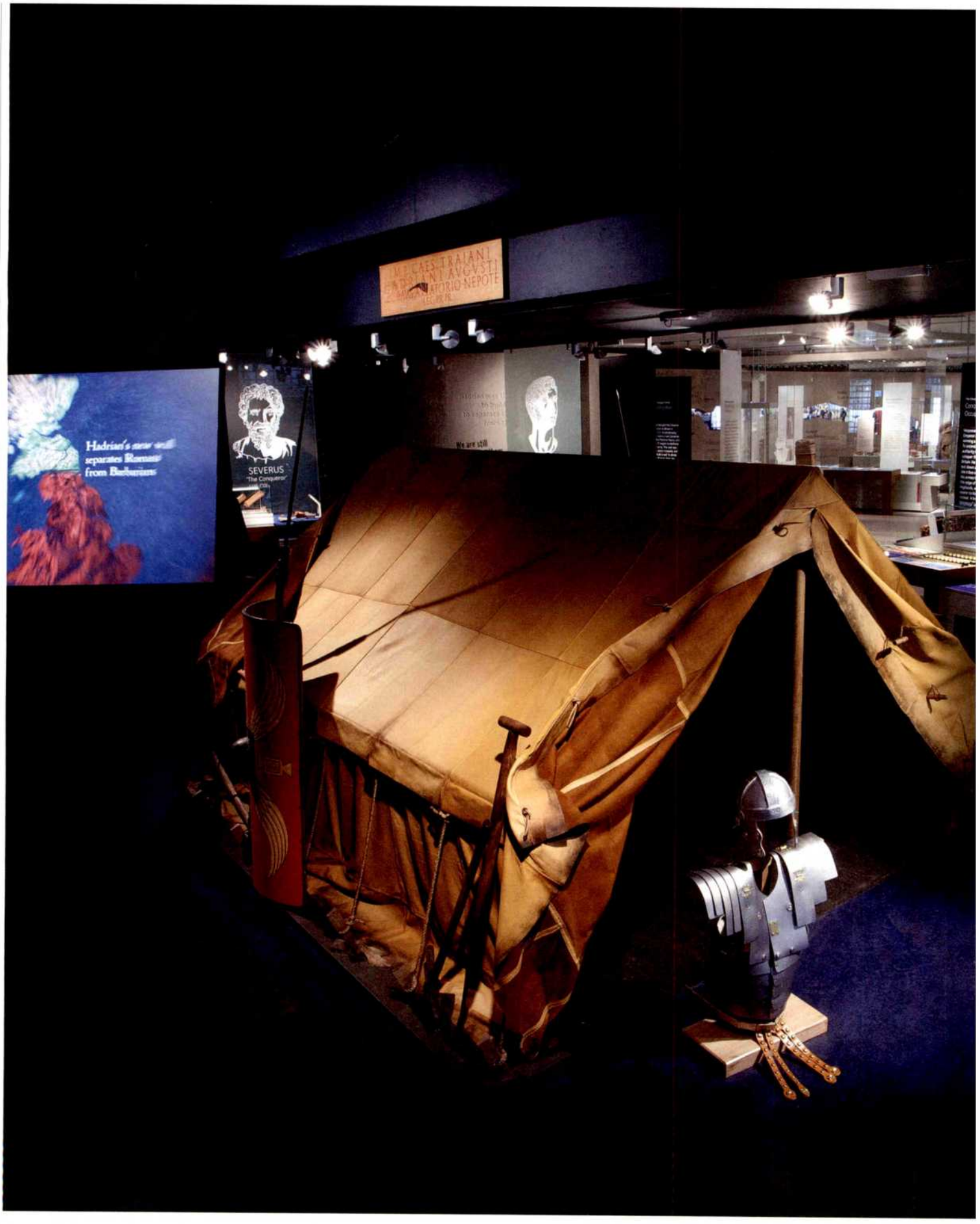

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Roman Frontier Gallery, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Carlisle, Cumbria

A new gallery gets visitors to think about the impact that Hadrian's Wall had on Britain and its people, says *Peter Lewis*

Above: a 1st-century Roman facemask that has been loaned to Tullie House Museum's Roman Frontier Gallery. Left: a copy of a typical Roman tent shows ordinary military life. Below: an amber ring with an image of Minerva

Each day from my study window I trace the line of Hadrian's Wall. Here at the northern edge of a now-defunct empire we still live in the shadow of the largest of the world's Roman artefacts. It is our regional unique selling feature. Our "international profile" as a "truly world-class tourist destination" has a distinctly aquiline nose.

The military necklace of turrets, forts and milecastles runs from Bowness in the west to Newcastle in the east, a total of 78 miles. Historians still debate the purpose. Hadrian insisted that the gods had ordered him to "keep intact the empire", "to divide Romans from the barbarians". The Romans had a word for us; the brittunculi – nasty little Brits.

This ethnic divide is eloquently illustrated at the start of Tullie House's recently opened Roman Frontier Gallery. The replica of a tall tombstone, now incongruously in Hexham Abbey, shows a young Gaulish officer/standard bearer on horseback in full parade armour. He carries the imperial standard. His stirrupless foot boots a cowering naked enemy in the backside. The barbarian, who resembles me, ineffectually waves a short sword.

The image sets the stage for a very remarkable and long-overdue exposition of the Roman occupation of Britain. The vast majority of artefacts and records for these centuries come from the Romans. The colonised left no written records. Soldiers were recruited from the wider reaches of the empire, including north Africa and Syria. Local British recruits could have been sent to Switzerland, Romania and Algeria. Britain was a tough posting. Only 4% of the empire's territory required 10% of the total imperial forces.

Imperial outpost

What did Romanisation really mean? Tullie House seeks to tell stories exploring the social consequences of invasion. Early in the exhibition visitors are reminded of the great cliched blockbusters of the screen as Julius Caesar; Quo Vadis; Cleopatra; Spartacus; Gladiator; Ben Hur; The Robe; I, Claudius; and others fight for our attention. So too does Monty Python's film, Life of Brian and the inevitable quotation, now so beloved of curators and designers: "Apart from better sanitation and medicine and education and irrigation and public health and a freshwater system and baths and public order – what have Romans done for us?" Adjacent words from Tacitus provide an immediate riposte, a frank delineation of imperial policy and tactics: arcades, baths, and ▶

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sumptuous banquets – the unsuspecting Britons spoke of such novelties as "civilisation" when, in fact, they were only a feature of their enslavement.

The exhibition shows the day-to-day domesticity of military life, not so much under canvas, but sub pellibus in specially constructed eight-man goatskin tents – six to sleep – two to guard. Visitors are invited to test the weight of the average military backpack. Endearingly, on display is a soldier's sewing kit – needles and bobbins of thread for darning socks and stitching shirts packed in a small box, forerunners of those kits we purloin from modern hotels.

We learn of the root vegetables, herbs and livestock the Romans imported to supplement their diets. A fragment of an amphora advertises "top quality old Tangiers Tunny Relish" – the famous garum made from the fermented intestines of fish. Mixed with wine, it made a culinary sauce. Diluted with water it was supplied to the legions as a tonic or a medicinal treatment for bites, dysentery, constipation and the removal of unwanted hair or freckles.

In one cabinet, two contrasting cultural pieces co-exist. A finger ring carved from a single piece of Baltic amber has a relief carving of Minerva. Nearby is a fragment of blue glass, a piece from a souvenir charioteer cup made for the masses.

The sheer scale of imperial travel is shown. An inscription, recording the visit of the emperor Septimius Severus and his sons Caracalla and Geta to Britain has the latter's name deleted. We know that when Severus died in York, Caracalla slaughtered his brother, deleting all documentary mention of Geta. Last year I saw an identically defaced stone in the National Museum of Damascus – a ruthless censorship of news at the two extreme ends of the empire.

Divided communities

The gradual accumulation of exhibits illustrates how Roman military precision, administrative expertise and ease of living was gradually eroded in Britain by political corruption and by the need ultimately to transfer troops to other war fronts.

One modern display, Living Frontiers, gives modern examples of politically constructed hard partitions. Just as Hadrian's Wall divided communities, created customs posts, checkpoints and excuses for abuse, so do modern-day barriers; those between the US and Mexico, the western Sahara and Morocco, Israel and Palestine, and so on. I had thought that this display might be a foolish gimmick but the juxtaposition is powerful and salutary.

This small gallery, built on the site of Carlisle's first Roman fort, has an importance beyond its 500 square metres. It is brilliantly conceived and beautifully executed. I was struck by the obvious deep concentration of visitors. They lingered, pondered and considered.

Museological provocation is a tricky art form. It is easy to excite folk sensually with artefacts, much harder to make them think. I visited a week after the gallery opened and there were already many handwritten visitor comment labels. One states what I was struggling to articulate: "I have visited Hadrian's Wall numerous times... this is the first time I have seriously considered the social and personal consequences of the wall."

In recent years a great deal of money has been spent wisely and magnificently in Newcastle and Vindolanda on blockbuster displays extolling the Romans. This superb gallery in Carlisle, so valuable in its intellectual achievement, cost a mere £1.5m, less than it would have cost for the local football team to hire a decent goalkeeper. Politicians and the Treasury, please note.

Peter Lewis is a writer and a past director of Beamish

Project data

Cost £1.5m
Main funders European Regional Development Fund; Northwest Regional Development Agency; Renaissance Northwest; Carlisle City Council; MLA Renaissance North West
Exhibition design Redman Design
Project management in-house
Main fit-out contractor Wood-Mitchell Building Group
AV and IT fit-out DJ Willrich
Display cases ClickNetherfield
Interactives Sirius
Audiovisual and multimedia Centre Screen; DJ Willrich; Zed Productions
Mountmaking National Museums Liverpool

Above: the Roman Frontier Gallery makes a stark point about divisions caused by political partitions. Below: 2nd-century Emperor Septimius Severus strengthened Hadrian's Wall

© REDMAN DESIGN AND LEE GARLAND 2011 (VIEW). © TULLIE HOUSE MUSEUM & ART GALLERY TRUST (BUST)

Firstsite, Colchester

Jane Weeks enjoys the quirky inaugural exhibition at Colchester's recently opened landmark cultural building

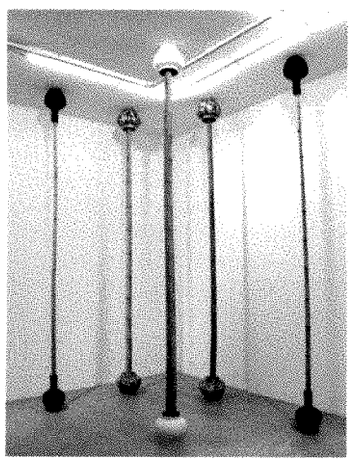
"Do not wave your hands to friends in the audience. As far as you are concerned, the audience does not exist." This stern rebuke from pageant master Louis N Parker to the amateur performers in the 1909 Colchester pageant was recorded on a poster. A 100 years later, the audience is at the heart of Firstsite, the new contemporary art space in Colchester with the mission to "make contemporary art relevant to everyone".

Firstsite is housed in a crescent-shaped building designed by Rafael Viñoly, a Latin-American architect based in New York. Clad in a distinctive copper-aluminium alloy, it glows gold even on damp days, hence the local nickname, the Golden Banana.

As the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the structure is designed to "float" on a concrete raft foundation. Despite its exotic appearance, the building looks as though it has always been there, as it embraces the remains of an 18th-century landscaped garden. So embedded is it in the site that it's difficult to get an overall view of the building. Inside, the glass walls bring in the historic buildings that surround it: part of the Roman wall, the remains of an 11th-century priory, and the Georgian architecture of the Minories, Firstsite's first home.

Mosaic centre

Despite being one of the largest contemporary art venues in the UK, everything is on a human scale. This is not one of those galleries designed to inspire shock and awe. You can tell that from the first installation, We the People by Danh Vo, whose latest project is a full-scale copper ▶



Left: Ai Weiwei's Bamboo and Porcelain is featured in Firstsite's exhibition, Camulodunum.
Right: Firstsite's exterior is covered with a copper-aluminium alloy

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replica of the Statue of Liberty; a mere fragment of the hand and part of the torch greet the visitor.

From the large glass entrance lobby, the ceiling slopes down and the arc of the building means that you are drawn to explore. The curved outer wall leads you past the auditorium to five interconnected galleries and a learning space, then to the cafe at the end of the building. Some of the galleries are almost on a domestic scale, and I wonder how flexible the spaces will prove to be.

The heart of Firstsite is the mosaic space, echoing the courtyard of the Roman villa that once stood here. Here, the Berryfield Mosaic, reinstated under glass on the site where it was found, provides both a focal point and a reminder that the site has been occupied for 2,000 years.

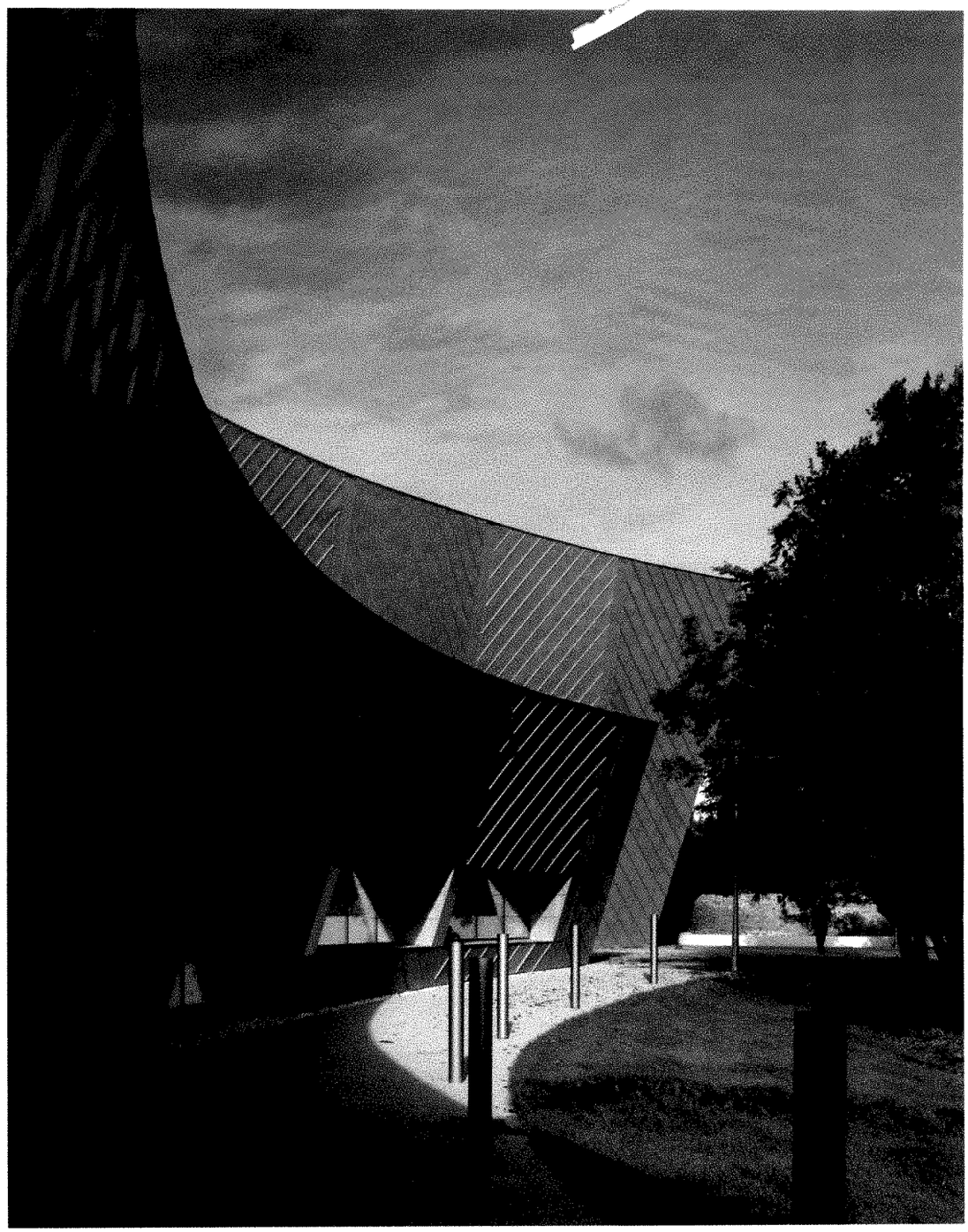
Firstsite is the same length as Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, but it's much warmer. The galleries are flooded with natural light, the walls curve gracefully, soft pebble-like benches invite you to linger, and there is a subtle use of colour: flashes of ochre, blue and red highlight the architecture and take the chill off the white walls.

Time travel

Its inaugural exhibition, Camulodunum (until 22 January 2012), takes its name from the original Roman name for Colchester. Commissions by international artists are combined with loans from major collections including Tate, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Arts Council England. (Firstsite is one of the partners in the Plus Tate network of regional art galleries.)

A keynote of the exhibition is quirky and witty juxtapositions that leap across centuries: Andy Warhol's Campbell Soup II – Oyster Stew shown next to photographs from the annual Colchester Oyster Feast, and Henry Moore's Helmet Head No 1 and No 3 with Roman remains.

This feeling of time travel continues with Aleksandra Mir's new installation Hello Colchester, which connects a 16th-century painting of Elizabeth I with a 21st-century Essex family wedding photograph, through a chain of 100 images. This throws up some surprising neighbours, such as the present Queen and Santa Claus, linked together by a young disabled soldier.



Firstsite curves around the Roman Berryfield Mosaic – now under glass – which has been in situ for 2,000 years

Project data

Cost £28m
Main funders Arts Council England £9.2m; Colchester Borough Council; Essex County Council; East of England Development Agency; University of Essex
Architect Rafael Viñoly Architects

One gallery is dedicated to ESCALA, the Latin-American art collection held by the University of Essex, a partner in the project. This collection, the best of its kind in Europe, has long looked for a suitable public venue but I found the initial exhibition of prints from Brazil, Paraguay and Chile distinctly underwhelming.

Given Firstsite's mission, the building is surprisingly difficult to navigate, and a plan, rather than just a list of galleries by number, would help with orientation. The only plan I saw was on the back of t-shirts worn by staff. Information about the works is in a booklet handed to each visitor, but the positioning of the labels, and the lack of images in the booklet, means that linking the work with the description can be hard work.

When I visited during half term, Firstsite was crowded with families, teenagers and older couples. Judging by the comments I overheard – "brilliant", "cool", "civilised" – it has accomplished its mission. But, once the novelty wears off, the challenge will be to retain their enthusiasm.

Jane Weeks is a museum consultant

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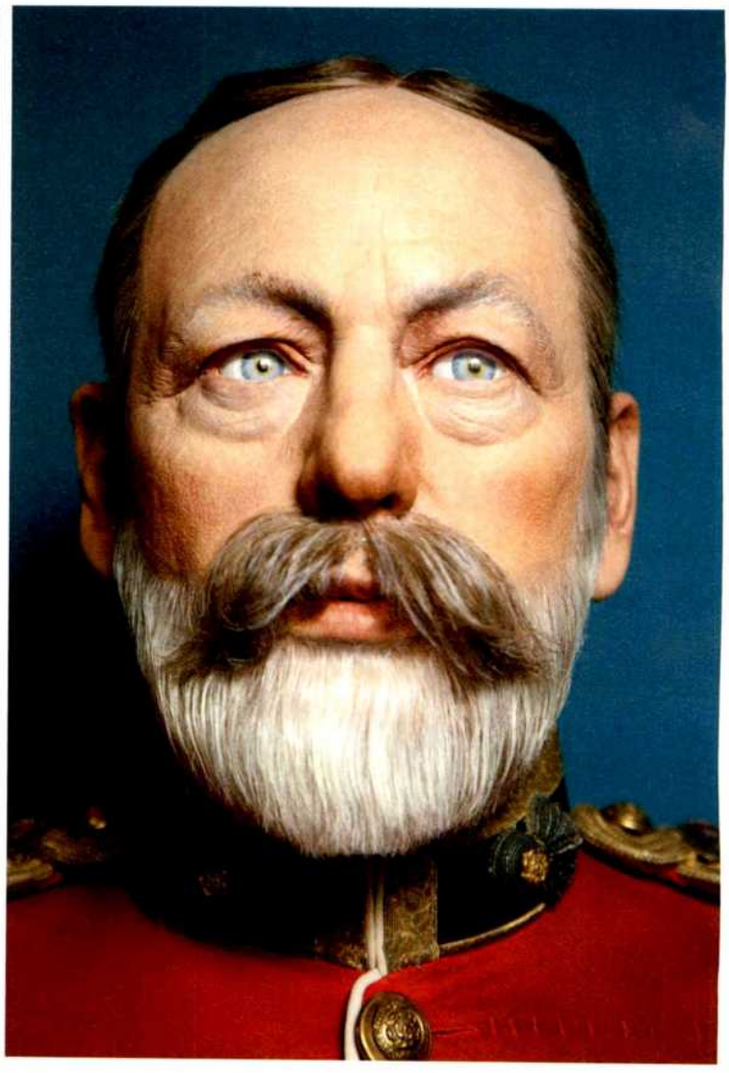
The Fusilier Museum, London

This regimental museum offers a good guide to the Royal Fusiliers but *Rachel Souhami* wanted to see a broader view of military, social and political history



Above: a model of George V, a former colonel-in-chief of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.
Right: the Fusilier Museum owns numerous medals won by its soldiers, including 12 Victoria Crosses.
Below: the museum is inside the Tower of London, where the regiment also has its headquarters.
Below right: a Napoleonic battle standard captured by fusiliers in 1809

I don't consider myself to be particularly unfit, but after my trip to the Fusilier Museum I realise that I'm a bit of a weakling. I learned that today's fusiliers carry backpacks weighing 80kgs. Displayed not far from the backpack is a machine gun, which doesn't look easy to carry either.

It seems to be a far cry from the first days of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers whose history is displayed in a renovated exhibition at the regiment's museum in London.

The museum is within the walls of the Tower of London, a site closely linked to the history of the Fusiliers. The regiment was formed in 1685 by James II and was posted to the tower to guard the Royal Armoury. The museum building, built in 1845, originally served as officers' quarters and today houses the regimental headquarters. This is reflected in the interior of the wall-to-wall carpeted museum, which has a slightly cramped feeling as though the exhibition has been squeezed into a few spare rooms.

Long-barrelled fusil

The exhibition covers four rooms on the ground floor: a room of medals to the left of the entrance and the historic collections on the right. If you want to view the regiment's history in chronological order you have to ignore the first room and make your way along a corridor that is lined with portraits of former officers and a case containing a very long gun. This is a fusil, the weapon that gave its name to the regiment. It used a flint to ignite the gunpowder rather than a slow burning fuse, which is why it was these soldiers' weapon of choice.

The historical displays skip the first 90 years of the regiment's history and start with its campaigns during the American war of independence. Here, one is reminded about the hand-to-hand nature of combat at that time, for although the fusiliers had muskets, they also fought with swords. An officer's red coat reminds visitors of the stature of the soldiers – they were tiny by today's standards – and that protective clothing had yet to be invented.

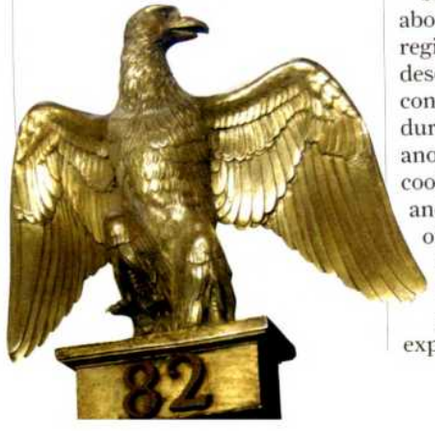
As the chronology unfolds across the first two rooms we see the change into khaki uniform, various means of protecting soldiers against conditions in foreign climes (such as a spine protector against heatstroke), and read more about the many wars the regiment has participated in. There is surprisingly little about changes in weaponry; indeed, most of the guns on display seem to have been taken as trophies from opposing armies.

Oversights

What is missing is a coherent approach to the social history of the Fusiliers. Dotted throughout the first two rooms are snippets about the army's treatment of soldiers, the regiment's patrons

Project data

Cost £350,000
Main funder Heritage Lottery Fund £300,000
Exhibition design and project management Headland Design
AV software Resolution DV
AV hardware Fusion LX
Display cases ClickNetherfield
Construction Early Action
Mountmaking Activation and Technical Models



and individual soldier's stories but they don't present a cogent picture of army or regimental life unless visitors are prepared to put in some work. For example, although there are plenty of quotations from individual soldiers dotted throughout the exhibition, visitors are only shown one or two sentences. Who were these soldiers? How do we know what they said about their life in the army? Why aren't their letters or notebooks on display?

Similar comments can be made about other aspects of the regiment's history. A text panel describes the appalling conditions soldiers lived in during the 19th century, while in another case is a silver wine cooler presented by William IV and presumably enjoyed by officers. The difference in living standards can be inferred, but a braver exhibition might be more explicit about such matters.

Global political contexts are also overlooked. The 38th to 42nd Battalions of the Fusiliers were formed at the outbreak of the first world war and became known as the Jewish Legion because they comprised Jews from the UK, US, Russia and Canada. This display takes up about one quarter of the second room, a significant amount of space, so one wants to know how and why the legion formed and what happened to it, but this information isn't given.

The third room of the exhibition presents the modern fusiliers. It skims over recent campaigns to present an image of technical competence, camaraderie and extreme fitness. An audiovisual exhibit – the only one with sound – is almost a recruitment video, in which current and former fusiliers extol the virtues of the regiment. Across the corridor is a whole room of cases and drawers of medals awarded to individual fusiliers. They are beautiful but it's difficult to understand the significance of the awards as there is little explanation.

Alongside the display of the equipment and clothing used by today's fusiliers are two touchscreen interactives that give visitors access to archive material. In a way, these exhibits summarise the exhibition: there is a wealth of material here, with some great stories about how and why people joined the regiment, life as a solider, why they were sent to war, and how the regiment has developed. But the documents are presented with little context or information about their origins.

Visitors will come away well versed in the history of the Royal Fusiliers, but it could have been so much more: the museum could have offered a window through which to view wider military, social and political history.

Rachel Souhami is a freelance curator and a lecturer in science communication at Imperial College London

Books

Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements

What difference have recent reflections on slavery made to museums? *Rose Roberto* on a book that seeks to find out

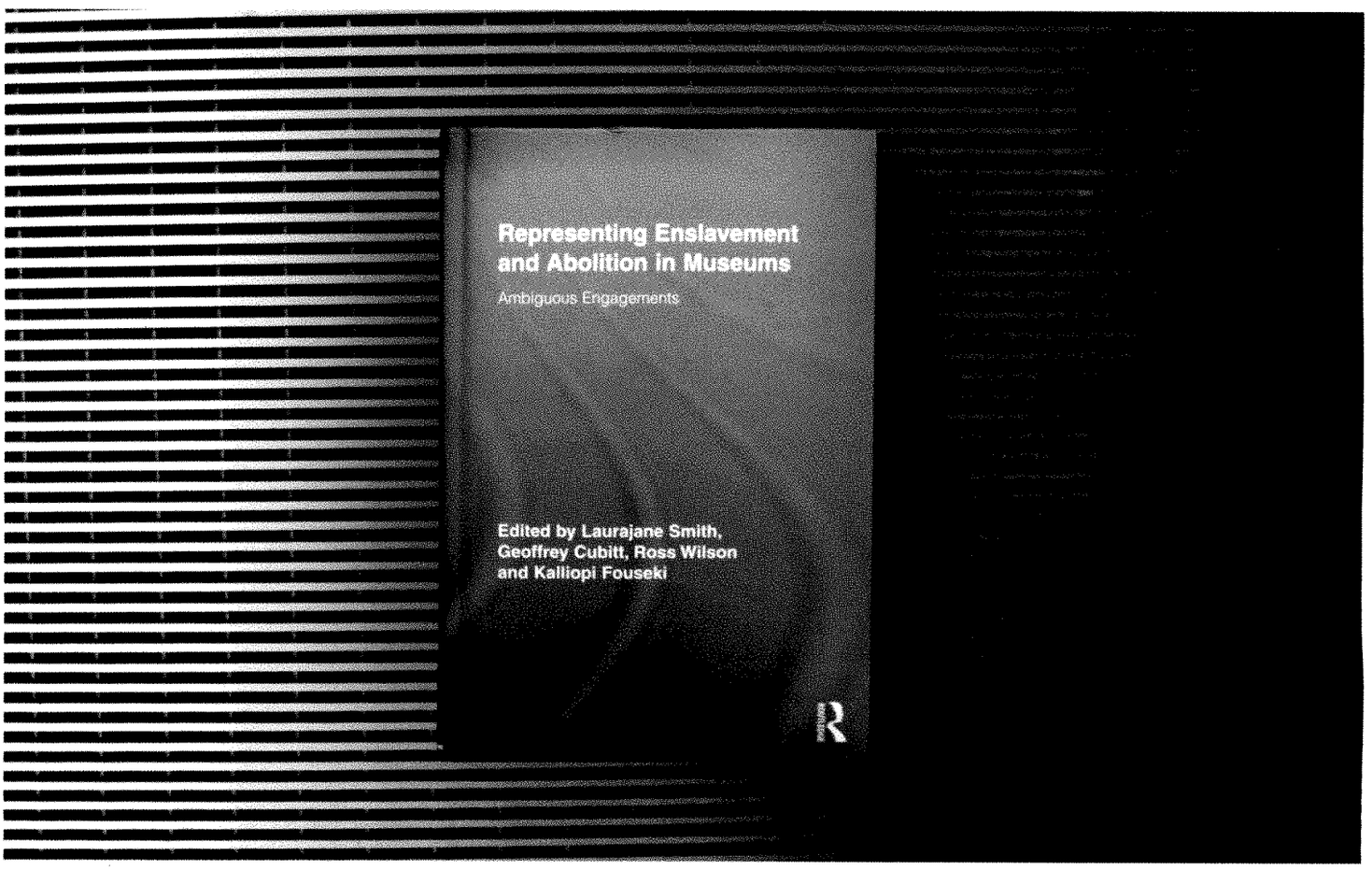
What the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade has taught humanity is a difficult question, with many contradictory answers. Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums is aptly subtitled Ambiguous Engagements. This book, collecting the diverse perspectives of curators, consultants, artists, museum visitors, and political and community activists, seeks to reflect the role of museums and galleries dealing with traumatic encounters and "atrocities as attractions". It questions what the UK heritage sector gained and failed to achieve in the 2007 commemoration of the Act of Parliament to abolish the transatlantic slave trade.

Several themes run throughout this volume: sustainable projects, community engagement, and a desire to innovate on different levels and create meaningful programmes. Some chapters discussing external and internal relationships are very analytical, some very personal. All of them, however, allow readers to slowly digest different aspects of complex strands of heritage.

The book's editors have carefully chosen contributors and projects as a means of discussing topical threads. Different approaches worked or didn't work because of particular factors in specific institutions.

For example, an institution such as the British Museum, with its history and collections intertwined with the rise of the British empire, was not really in a position to have an exhibition based solely on its vast holdings of African collections (some of which were acquired through colonial oppression) without arousing resentment from the very communities it was trying to gain as new audiences.

Some institutions took the approach of inviting guest curators, who selected new material from outside. For instance, Temi Odumosu curated Exhibiting Difference at the Royal College of Surgeons. Other institutions decided to create a permanent exhibition or permanently establish a different research focus, allowing additional interpretations of the collections they already had. The Museum of London Dockland's



gallery, London, Sugar and Slavery, asks its visitors to examine how the transatlantic slave trade created the wealth of London's economy.

Some chapters have an international outlook, examining monuments and attractions in the United States and Jamaica. These are included to point the way to possible future directions for the UK when it comes to remembering collective trauma.

The 2007 anniversary, as defined by the British government, was extremely controversial and offensive to some. There were voices of dissent about the idea of "celebrating 1807" at all, from African-Caribbean communities and groups such as Ligali and Rendezvous of Victory.

One of the strengths of this book is that in addition to audience surveys and academic appraisals, it contains an interview with campaigner Toyin Agbetu, who protested at Westminster Abbey demanding a formal apology on behalf of pan-African groups from the Queen and Tony Blair for Britain's role in the transatlantic slave trade during the 200 years prior to the 1807 Slave Trade Act.

As a whole, Representing Enslavement and Abolition nicely encapsulates first-hand experience for readers working in and with museums. This book repeatedly stresses that the most innovative heritage projects to came out of the anniversary were not from the usual suspects normally associated with abolitionist figures or with traumatic history. Success came from attempts to reveal hidden histories and connect collections with wider world narratives – one narrative in the 18th century being interpreted, the other in the 21st century that was simultaneously unfolding and being shaped.

Edited by Laurajane Smith, Geoff Cubitt, Kalliopi Fouseki and Ross Wilson, Routledge, £80, ISBN 978-0415-88504-1

Rose Roberto is the subject librarian for fine arts and museum studies at the University of Leeds. She was responsible for collecting and cataloguing websites for the Internet Archive's British Slave Trade Legacies project, 2007-2008

On my bookshelf

Lucy Harland

Made To Stick, by Chip and Dan Heath

The director of Unicef used to carry a small bag containing eight teaspoons of sugar and one of salt, which he presented to prime ministers and heads of state, saying: "The contents of this bag cost less than a cup of tea, but mixed with one litre of water can save a child's life."

This story is from Chip and Dan Heath's book Made to Stick about communicating ideas in a way that makes them engaging and unforgettable.

Using plenty of examples, the authors advocate that the most powerful messages are either simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, emotional or told through stories.

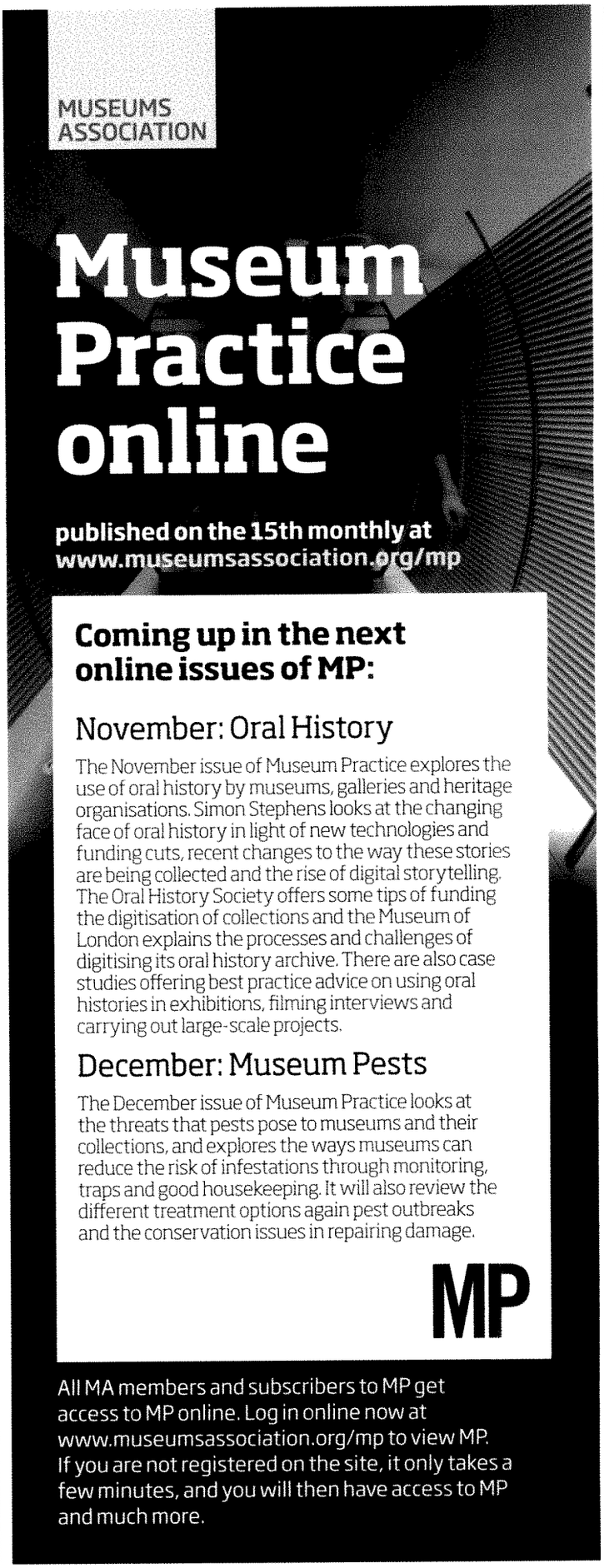
Made to Stick clearly provides lessons for museum interpretation. The Heath brothers demonstrate again and again that good communication is about understanding your audience and shaping your storytelling accordingly.

Being focused doesn't mean that your story has to lack subtlety and nuance but if you know what you're trying to say and why you're trying to say it, then other people have a better chance of understanding you.

When I worked as a BBC radio producer, we summarised programme and series ideas in 30 words. It's a great test of whether your thinking is clear enough.

The tone of this book can tend towards classic American pop psychology and management manuals but the stories are interesting and relevant.

Lucy Harland is the director of Lucidity Media and Scotland's national representative for the Museums Association



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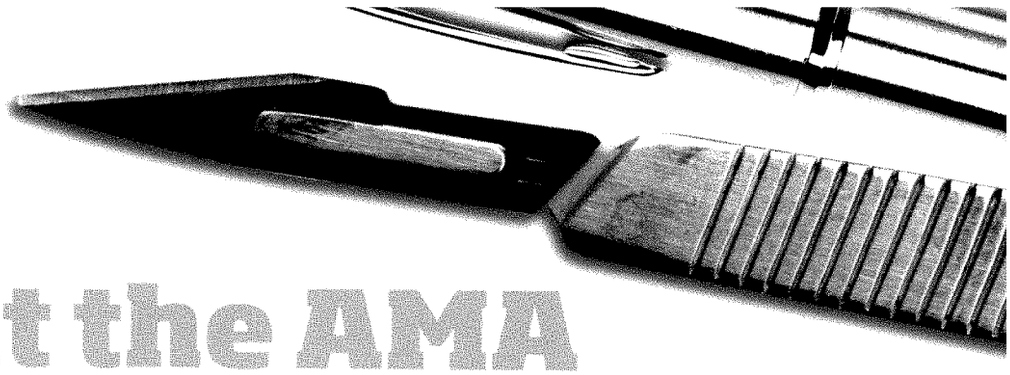

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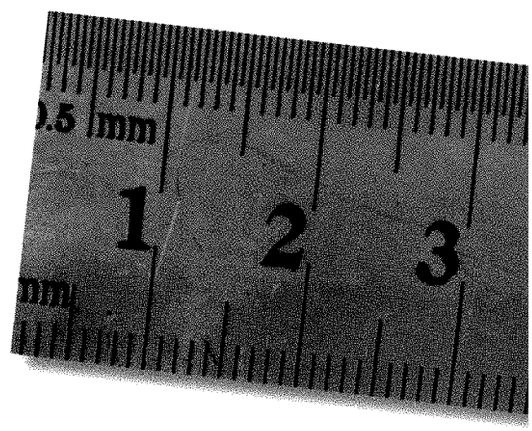

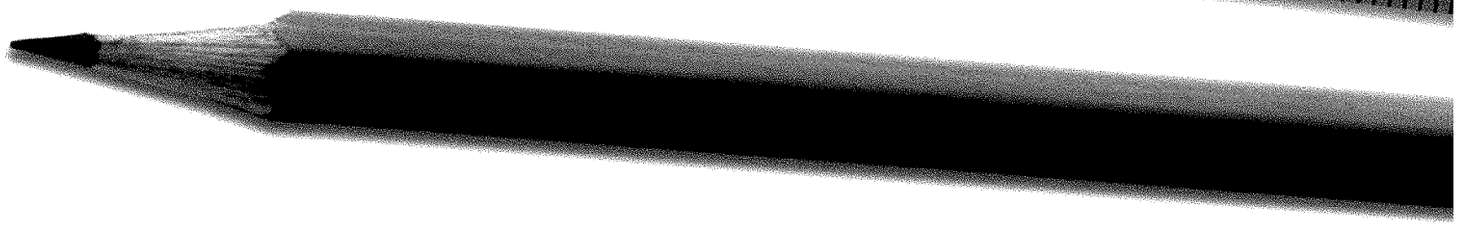

The revised AMA still holds the same status it always did but it is now more accessible to everyone working in or for museums and has closer ties to the workplace.

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www.museumsassociation.org/ama

Obituary

John Matthews (1954-2011)

John Matthews, who has died aged 57 of cancer, was a passionate advocate for the arts and heritage, and became renowned as a visionary in the world of marketing for the cultural sector.

Born in Bedford and educated at Jesus College, Oxford, in 1974 he became house manager at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff. He then worked for Caricature theatre, Cardiff, and as marketing officer for the Arts Council England based in Oxford. In 1983 funding was agreed for Cardiff Arts Marketing, the pioneering consortium that eventually led to the foundation of the network of audience development agencies throughout the UK.

Always at the heart of initiatives to build the profession of marketing, in 1993 he helped to establish the Arts Marketing Association (which now boasts some 1,700 members). In 1989 John was one of three co-founders of McCann Matthews Millman, one of the first consultancies to specialise in providing advisory services to the creative industries.

Over the years John worked with a variety of museums and heritage bodies, bringing to bear his analytical and strategic planning skills. He was able to turn his hand to the complexities of major research projects, such as his evaluation of the Heritage Lottery Fund's first major awards programme, and to the day-to-day practicalities of audience development strategies for volunteer-led museums. He brought patience and a persuasive charm to advising clients with little experience of working with consultants. And he made it fun to work on his projects.

John Matthews was a visionary in the world of arts marketing

John was adept at combining the expertise of a group of consultants to provide the best mix for his clients. He was an admirable team player, whether working on a big scheme such as the feasibility study for the development of new library and archival resources for the National Maritime Museum, or moving Shrewsbury's main museum from Rowley's House to the Music Hall.

He was equally at home with more modest but no less important projects, such as developing proposals for the future of the Cowper & Newton Museum in Olney or ways of celebrating the heritage of Rushden, the Northamptonshire shoe town.

John was a highly effective speaker, with a dry wit that easily disarmed sceptics. Above all, he was a consummate professional and a loyal and generous colleague and friend.

John is survived by his wife, Judi, and his stepdaughter Kate.

Carole Strachan, Val Bott, Anne Millman and Judi Richards

Profile George Shaw: anxious artist

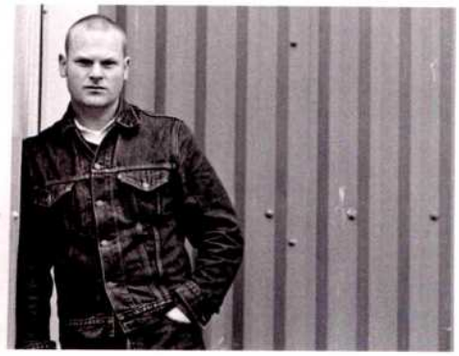
I Woz Ere, an exhibition of George Shaw's paintings of the Coventry council estate where he grew up, runs at the city's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum until 11 March 2012. Shaw is one of four nominees for the Turner Prize, which this year is hosted by the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. The winner will be announced on 5 December.

When do you paint?
It's a job, so every day from early in the morning. I had a very good run when all the effort was fruitful but as I think more about the nature of what I do and as there has gradually been a larger audience for it, a lot of anxieties have crept in. Sometimes, it's like someone is looking at me through the letterbox. It means I'm more nervous. As a result, things can go wrong... a bit like those cookery shows on television.

How do you feel about I Woz Ere, your exhibition "homecoming"?
Anxiety again; the paintings are very much my personal vision of Tile Hill and I fear that might jar with what others feel about the place. Putting the work up against the "real world" like this is a bit like doing a portrait of someone and hanging it right next to where they sit. Why would you do that?

While thinking about the show, I've been using the school reunion allegory... but they all seem to end in some sort of punch-up. The ideal thing, therefore, would be to watch everyone from a blacked-out car. Coming from Coventry, the influence of Peeping Tom is never far from what I do.

Are you showing new work, too?
Yes, I've done some new watercolours of the estate. My focus, however, is still on what I remember; what has been added since I left is not part of my personal history.



George Shaw's paintings revisit his memories of growing up in Coventry

So, for example, I look away from the magnificent new library to concentrate on a battered signpost. Any human presence in the pictures is once again felt only by what it leaves behind. If you put a figure in a painting, the painting becomes a narrative of what that person's doing. This is my story, my eyesight.

Why do you favour Humbrol enamel, the paint of model plane builders?
It was the only thing to hand when I originally felt the urge to paint – no Georgian oil colour to hand in our house. It's a most perverse choice; it's not really made for painting trees and bricks on canvas. It's for flat areas of colours, for wings and fuselages.

After the Turner Prize nomination, a senior salesperson from Humbrol got in touch. I'm not sure what that could lead to.

Probably never having to pay for another tin of the stuff?
Could be. My girlfriend says: "You're always using Humbrol paint. Isn't there something you could do with Porsche?"

Moves

London's National Portrait Gallery's new chief curator is **Tarnya Cooper**. She had been the curator of 16th-century portraits there. Her predecessor, **Jacob Simon**, has retired.

Diversify trainee **Sarah Fellows** has started at the National Railway Museum, York, as an assistant interpretation developer.

Broadcaster **Kirsty Wark** has become the first Friend of the Hunterian, the University of Glasgow.

Linsi Parker-Turner has left the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, where she was events and publicity officer. **Rachel Yi Yuan** has taken over the position.

The chief executive of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, **Bruno Racine**, has been elected to chair the board of the Europeana Foundation, responsible for the EU's digital cultural heritage showcase. He takes over from **Elisabeth Niggemann**, director of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.

Ann Green, chairwoman of the Royal Armouries, Leeds, is leaving after 13 years there.

Film producer **Dan Kidner** becomes the new director of artists' film organisation Picture This in Bristol.

Jenny Abramsky has been reappointed as the chairwoman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund for a further three years.

Dorothy Wilson is the new chairman of the trustees at the Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust. She is chief executive and artistic director of mac birmingham arts centre.

Tarnya Cooper

Ann Green

Two new trustees for Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales: **Robert Pickard**, emeritus professor of neurobiology at the University of Cardiff; and television executive **Glenda Jones**. Their terms of appointment will run from 1 June 2012 to 31 May 2016.

Simon Freakley, chief executive of Zolfo Cooper Europe, becomes the chairman of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, next month, following the end of **James Lupton**'s tenure. Three new trustees join him: PR consultant **Colleen Harris**; **Joseph Spence**, master of Dulwich College, London; and **Radhika Radhakrishnan**, finance director of 20th-Century Fox UK Home Entertainment.

Who got the job?

Manager, Drum Castle and Craigievar Castle, National Trust for Scotland
Salary: £21,125
Advertised: MJ, May 2011

Alison Burke
What does the job entail?
There is the beautiful and glamorous side of working in a historic interior or discussing the development of historic gardens, but more importantly, there are strategic decisions that need to be made to ensure that each of the castles has a secure future.
Other jobs Lecturer in Greek drama, museum education at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum; manager, education programme, Pollok House, National Trust for Scotland.
Qualifications MA classical civilisation and theatre studies, MLitt classics, PhD classical drama.

© NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON. PHOTOGRAPHY: NATALIA CALVOCORESSI (COOPER)

Museums Journal Jobs

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For more information visit
www.museumsassociation.org/careers/find-a-job

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Curator for private museum in Normandy

We are looking for a full-time curator for our private museum located 90 minutes west of Paris. Education and two years experience in museology or history of art relating to Levantine antiquities and Ottoman and Persian art required, as well as some curatorial experience in another museum. It is imperative that the person is fluent in English (native) and French, (Arabic a plus), and that the person relocate to the area of the museum.

The collection is focused on the ancient Levant, (defined as most of the Ottoman Empire, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, the Holy Land and Persia), its relationship to Western Europe, and the influences of one on the other. Individual galleries are dedicated to a particular civilization, from the Babylonians to the 20th century Ottomans. The high point of each civilization is the context for displaying the collection which includes about 2000 art objects, some of them ancient, and another 1000 objects of jewellery, ceramic tiles, and 19th century paintings, including Orientalists.

Immediate priorities will include inputting descriptive information into an online database, and developing museum quality catalogues for publication of the different sections of the collection. Ongoing important tasks for the curator include overseeing and monitoring its technical maintenance and conservation, and overseeing the restoration of objects where required.

The curator will also be participating on teams to prepare a potential Internet website, and contributing to a series of books/publications devoted to the theme of the museum and its collections.

As this is a private collection, no exhibitions are planned at this time.

How to Apply:
If qualified, submit CV and covering letter to: **wkbryant19@yahoo.com**

The closing date for applications is January 15th, 2012.

Museums Journal **Jobs**

Full details of the jobs below are found on the Museums Association website www.museumsassociation.org/jobs

Jobs currently online

Museum Internship	Royal Academy of Music Museum	London	Closing date 2nd Dec
Curator of Art Collections	English Heritage	South East	Closing date 7th Dec
Director of Birmingham Museums Trust	Birmingham City Council	West Midlands	Closing date 9th Dec
Curator	Qatar Museums Authority	Qatar	Closing date 31st Dec
Deputy Director	Qatar Museums Authority	Qatar	Closing date 31st Dec
Management of Geevor Tin Mine Invitation to Tender	Cornwall County Council	South West	Closing date 6th Feb

To download our media pack with more details about recruitment advertising go to www.museumsassociation.org/advertise or phone Emma Mitchinson on 020 7426 6941.

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Museums Journal and the Museums Association website offer tailored, professional recruitment advertising that will ensure you fill your vacancies quickly and cost-effectively. They are simply the best places to advertise jobs for the museum and gallery sector.

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(including maternity cover and internships)
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Volunteers

Advertise volunteer posts for free!
The package includes a magazine listing and full details on the MA website.

To place a listing or to find out more please phone Emma Mitchinson on 020 7426 6941 or email adverts@museumsassociation.org

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

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Museums Journal (MJ) magazine remains the premier choice for recruitment advertising in print. MJ publishes on the first day of every month, distributed to all Museums Association (MA) members and MJ subscribers. All jobs booked in Museums Journal are also featured online.

The MA website carries details of all the best jobs in the museum, gallery and heritage sectors. The MA site is very popular and visitor numbers are rising all the time. The jobs pages are the most visited on the site and online has the advantage of being up-to-the-minute in terms of current opportunities.

From July 2010 the **MA's e-newsletter** moved from monthly to weekly, greatly increasing its profile. With over 27,000 subscribers it enjoys very strong viewing rates and click-throughs. The top jobs of the week are displayed prominently on the e-newsletter. You can subscribe today at **www.museumsassociation.org**

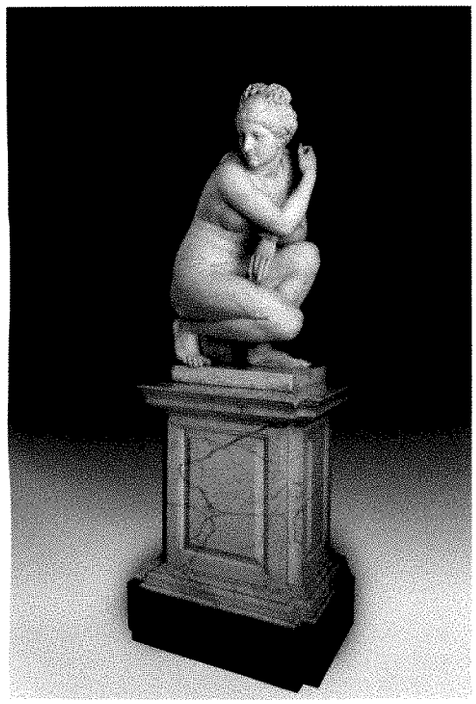
MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

To download our new media pack with more details about recruitment advertising go to **www.museumsassociation.org/advertise** or phone Emma Mitchinson on 020 7426 6941.

Acquisitions: The National Museum of the Royal Navy has been given a 111-year old Christmas pudding that was sent to the Naval Brigade during the Boer war

Two works by Elizabeth Fritsch have been acquired by National Museum Wales

Funds are being sought to keep John Nost the Elder's Crouching Venus in the UK



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Find an object

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loan throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● Horsham District Council & the Friends of Horsham Museum wish to dispose of the following items to a Registered/Accredited museum. The items include a collection of agricultural and woodworking tools; cobblers' lasts; 23 items of packaging, tins and bottles; a pair of ice-skates; a jelly mould; **one bean slicer**; one railway lamp; a pair of butter pats. Details available on request. Recipient museum to collect.
Contact: Teresa Lefevre
email: Teresa.Lefevre@horsham.gov.uk

● The National Army Museum, London, wishes to dispose of the following objects by gift to Registered/Accredited museums: civilian and military plaster and wax rubbings, moulds and casts for the production of buttons, badges and medals; six civilian medallions; a 19th-century **copy of a 1725 Scottish sword pistol**; and a small quantity of equipment and furniture. Lists and further details available on request. There is no list for the rubbings, moulds and casts; any person interested will need to look through the items themselves prior to making a formal request. Recipient must collect.
Contact: Ed Purvis
tel: 0207 881 2471
email: epurvis@nam.ac.uk

● Lancashire County Museum Service wishes to dispose of a late model Northrop motor that may have been adapted. Set up to weave four-colour splits with **12 shafts** with a 56-inch reedspace. Parts may be missing but in good condition. Interested parties to collect from Helmshore Mill Textile Museum, Helmshore, Lancashire.

The service also offers a central vacuum system consisting of a motor and pump and hose system with a Sturtevant AC motor. Not working. To be collected from Burnley, Lancashire.
Contact: Lis Chard
tel: 01772 535174
email: elisabeth.chard@lancashire.gov.uk

● Thinktank, Birmingham, wishes to dispose of a number of good quality modern **showcases** dating from 2001. Details available on request.
Contact: Jack Kirby
tel: 0121 202 2279
email: jack.kirby@thinktank.ac

Wanted

● A PhD student at the University of Ulster is focusing on how the visual arts sector in Northern Ireland and the Republic is dealing with the issues created by **climate change**. Contact from those with practice or interest in this area would be very welcome, as would comments on the proposed methodology/approaches to be used in the research. An outline of the research can be found at: *www.bloftus.co.uk*.
Contact: Belinda Loftus
tel: 07736 487505
email: Loftus-B1@email.ulster.ac.uk

Export bars

● The culture minister has placed temporary export bars on the following: A painting by Francesco Guardi, Venice, A View of the **Rialto Bridge** from the Fondamenta del Carbon. The decision on the

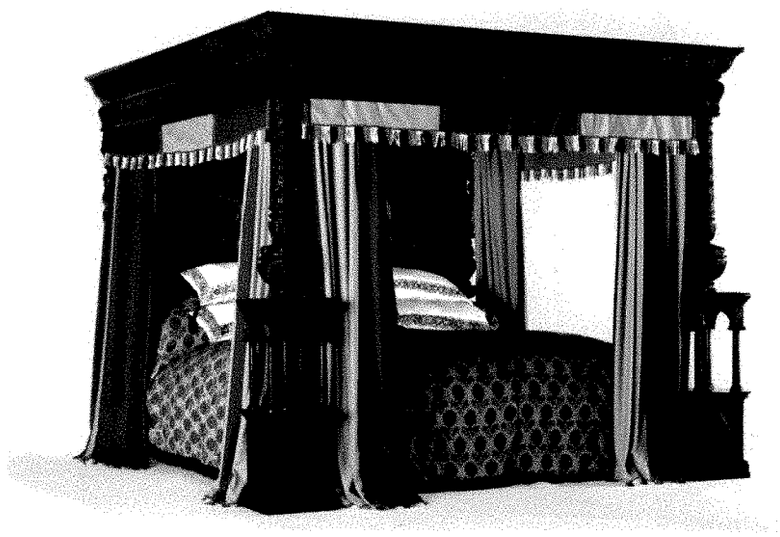
export licence application will be deferred until 16 January 2012. This period may be extended until 16 July if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £26,697,250 (plus VAT) is expressed.

A pair of Italian **console tables** made to celebrate the Venetian conquest of the Greek Peloponnese, between 1685 and 1688. The decision on the export licence application is deferred until 3 January 2012. This period may be extended until 3 May if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase the tables at the recommended price of £735,900 is expressed.

A sculpture by John Nost the Elder, the **Crouching Venus**. The decision on the export licence application is deferred until 3 January 2012. This period may be extended until 3 May if a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase the sculpture at the recommended price of £485,000.

A North Italian Empire ornate wash basin on stand, known as an **athénienne**. The decision on the export licence application is deferred until 3 January 2012. This period may be extended until 3 May if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase at the recommended price of £632,940 is expressed.

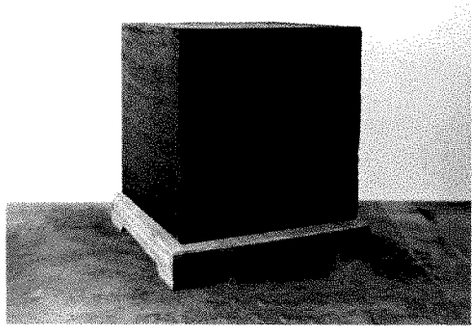
Contact: The Secretary, The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Arts Council England, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NG. tel: 0207 973 5259 email: peter.rowlands@artscouncil.org.uk



Elizabethan bed: the Great Bed of Ware returns to its hometown museum, thanks to grants from HLF and others

Acquisitions

● Oxford's Ashmolean Museum has acquired a terracotta model designed by the French sculptor, **Clodion**. The Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary had been on loan to the Ashmolean since 2003 and the acquisition was purchased through Gurr Johns under the tax-concessionary scheme for private sales to museums, from Museum Trust Funds (Virtue-Tebbs, Madan, Bouch, Russell, and Jones funds), the Art Fund, the Henry Moore Foundation, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the Ashmolean, and many other donors.



A Ton of Tea: Ai Weiwei's new work has been acquired by Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

● A Ton of Tea, a new work by Chinese artist **Ai Weiwei**, has been acquired by Bristol Museum and Art Gallery as part of Bristol's Art Fund collection of contemporary art, developed in partnership with Arnolfini and supported with £1m from the Art Fund.

● A rare 18th-century silver **wine cooler** has been saved for the nation after Leeds Museums and Galleries coordinated raising more than £2m. A grant of £1.83m was secured from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, along with £140,000 from the Art Fund and further support from many other heritage funders and charities including the Leeds Art Collections Fund.

● Works by Helena Almeida, Melanie Smith and Alina Szapocznikow, have been acquired by the Tate Collection thanks to the **Outset/Frieze Art Fair Fund**. The fund enables Tate to acquire works by emerging and leading international artists from London's Frieze Art Fair. This year the £150,000 made available by the fund is the highest ever.

● **Burning Down the House**, a portrait by David LaChapelle of the late designer Alexander McQueen and his muse Isabella Blow has been acquired by the National Portrait Gallery, London.

● The National Museum of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard has been given a **111-year old Christmas pudding** that was sent to the Naval Brigade during the Boer war. The tinned pudding will now undergo conservation work.

● Thanks to the Art Fund and the Derek Williams Trust, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 02074266940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

London members' meeting
5 December 2011, British Museum, London
The latest in the MA's series of free members' meetings, which are designed to keep members informed and give them more input in the policies and direction of the association. Held at the British Museum, this event runs from 10am-4pm and is open to all MA members living and working in London. It is free of charge for all Individual, Institutional and Corporate Members to attend.
For more information, visit www.museumsassociation.org/events

Getting the most out of the AMA
7 December 2011, London
A workshop for anyone doing, or thinking of doing, the Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA). The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. The afternoon session will explore updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants can come for the day or the afternoon.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Getting the most out of the AMA
1 February 2012, Birmingham
See 7 December (above) for full details.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Victorian angel: the wall-paintings in St Mary's, Edlesborough, Buckingham, are featured in the Churches Conservation Trust's new online resource

© CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST (ST MARY)

(NMW) has acquired two new pieces by **Elizabeth Fritsch**, which form part of a new display at the museum. Optical Bowl with Fractured Rim, and Counterpoint Vase in Twelve Tones, costing £20,800, are important examples of Fritsch's early work.

● The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has acquired a neo-classical sculptural relief by 18th-century artist John Deare. **Caesar Invading Britain** is the first marble by Deare to join a British public collection. The purchase of the relief was funded by the Count Caruana and Ivan Booth Bequest.

Funding

● A grant of £229, 200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) means that the Elizabethan **Great Bed of Ware** will be able to be displayed at Ware Museum, Hertfordshire, for one year between April 2012-March 2013 before returning to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The HLF grant is joined by £15,000 from the Ware Museum trustees' reserve fund, £10,000 from Ware District Council and many other donations.

Scholarship: conservation student Sarah Freeman is one of 2011's Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust winners

● Arts Council England has awarded a national lottery grant of almost £99,000 to the **Ironbridge Gorge Museum** Trust for a London 2012 Cultural Olympiad digital art commission. The grant enables the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust to commission international artist Kurt Hentschläger to create a new digital artwork entitled CORE. This work will form part of the London 2012 Festival.

● The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded a £500,000 grant to support the expansion of the **Museum of Free Derry**. The funding will be used to expand the current building to house a dedicated community space, an archive and research area and extend the existing exhibition area and public facilities.

Awards

● Bristol Museum, Galleries and Archives, and Essex County Council Libraries feature on the shortlist for the 2011 **Jodi Awards**, which focus on the use of technology to widen information access to disabled people. The winners will be announced on 2 December.

● A saddler, stonemason a silversmith and an easel painting conservation student are among the eight winners of the 2011 **Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust** (QEST). The trust, which supports craftspeople in their careers, is embarking on a Diamond Jubilee appeal during 2012 with the intention of doubling the number of scholarships that it awards each year.

● Nominations for the Telegraph **Family-Friendly Museum** Award 2012 close on 2 December. The winner will be announced in May 2012. *www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk/awards*

Web news

● The Churches Conservation Trust has launched a new online resource providing an interactive guide to some of the **wall-paintings** in its care. *www.visitchurches.org.uk/wallpaintings*

● **Colchester and Ipswich Museums** has launched a new interactive website. The new website gives customers information of each venue and also includes upcoming events, photographs of highlighted objects. *www.cimuseums.org.uk*

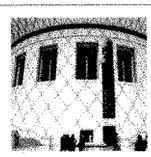
● The National Trust has launched an iPhone app that includes listings and descriptions of all 150 **National Trust gardens** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and a browse and search facility to help users find their nearest garden. Developed by the trust's in-house team, the free app can be downloaded from iTunes app store.

Introduction to mentoring
28 February 2012, London
A workshop for anyone who wants to mentor for the AMA. The session provides a guide through all the stages of the process.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Mentor refresher
28 February 2012, London
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to receive an update on any developments in the scheme and a chance to share information.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

Getting the most out of the AMA
7 March 2012, London
See 7 December (above) for full details.
To book your place, email cpd@museumsassociation.org

East Midlands members' meeting
14 March 2012, Leicester
The next in the series of free meetings, which are designed to keep members informed and enable more input to the policies and direction of the association. This event runs from 10am to 4pm and is open to all MA members living and working in the East Midlands. It is free of charge for all Individual, Institutional and Corporate Members to attend. *www.museumsassociation.org/events*



The British Museum is the venue for this month's MA members' meeting

Museums Association Conference & Exhibition 2012
8-9 November 2012, Edinburgh
The most important event in the museum and heritage calendar and a must-attend for everyone working in the sector. The conference brings together a range of professionals to debate the latest thinking and discover new ideas and products. Full programme and booking details will be available in May 2012. *www.museumsassociation.org/conference*

John Atkinson Grimshaw: Reflections on the Thames, Westminster 1880 (Leeds Art Gallery) Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

Sonia Solicari

"People have often seen John Atkinson Grimshaw as a nostalgic and sentimental painter because he produced so many pictures of moonlit country lanes and nocturnal street scenes.

I think this painting, however, is more about modernity and he's placing the moon this time in the context of urban developments in late 19th-century London.

There are three types of illumination here; as well as the moon, there's the orange gaslight glow of Big Ben and the very bright electric lights that had recently been installed along the Embankment.

There has been some new thinking recently, too, about the figures seen here. The female in the foreground of the painting has always been viewed as a prostitute; they were traditionally depicted at that time as women often in difficult circumstances staring at the Thames, possibly contemplating suicide.

But now we believe that she is, in fact, a respectable woman who is able to go out on her own at night because of the improvements made in street lighting. All of a sudden this area, which had previously been shady and dangerous, became accessible and safe to all.

This is still a hot topic today, of course. People like to feel safe in towns at night and many get upset when their council threatens to turn the streetlights off. We're used to the freedom that electric lighting affords us.

Atkinson Grimshaw's earlier works were very pre-Raphaelite in style and focused on natural themes but he progressed from those very intricate works to pictures that were more about creating a mood or emotion.

He took some artistic licence, too. Some of the lonely country lanes and alleyways he depicted were amalgamations of different places he knew.

Even if they don't actually know him by name, a lot of people are familiar with Atkinson Grimshaw's work because he has been so widely reproduced on cards and posters over the years.

I also think it helps that Atkinson Grimshaw is still something of a mysterious figure. Most of what we know about the artist is from how other people described him and his work.

A lot of his work can be enigmatic, too. There are no set stories to these pictures of single female figures walking down rain-lashed streets so we can put our narrative to his work.

The work of other painters at the time could be quite prescriptive; you often knew what the story was and who the characters were. With Atkinson Grimshaw, it's up to you to decide."

Sonia Solicari is the principal curator at the Guildhall Art Gallery in the

Interview by John Holt. Atkinson Grimshaw: Painter of Moonlight runs at the Guildhall Art Gallery, London, until 15 January 2012

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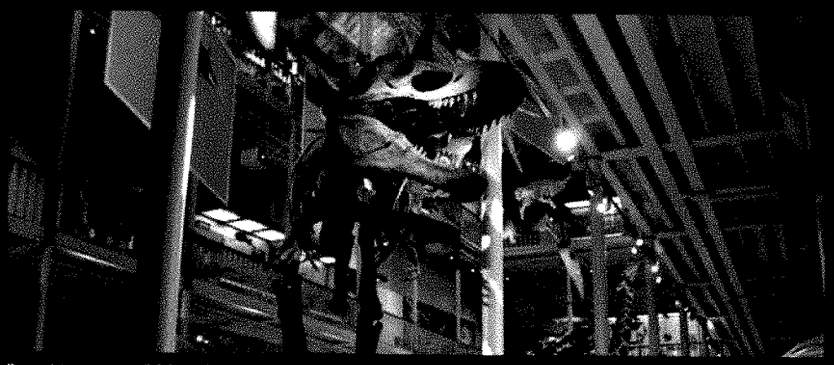
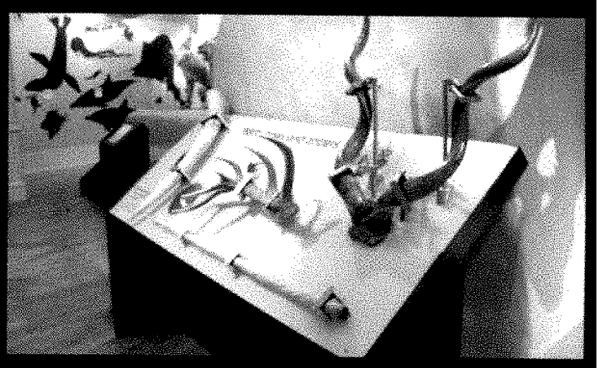
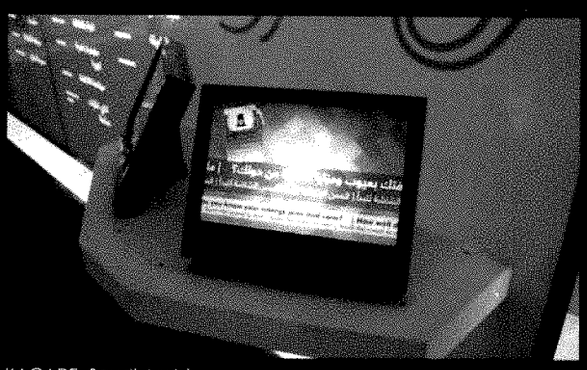




Royal Museum Of Scotland, Edinburgh



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